ROADRUNNER

VOL 4 No 9 OCT 81 $1

NZ's latest pop export TIGERS

GRACE JONES MATT FINISH

THE CURE MENTALS TACTICS

ALF OMEGA

DAVID JOHANSEN
LAUGHING CLOWNS

SLOW CHILDREN
JOHN DOE'S SUICIDE!

BRITAIN '81
Pop as Industrial Design

33 REGULAR

mental
as anything

音 楽 家

cats & dogs

OUR NEW L.P.

with
IF YOU LEAVE ME—CAN I COME TOO?
TOO MANY TIMES

RML 53006

LETTERS

Dear Roadrunner

Whilst renewing my subscription for the next year I thought I would offer my congrats on the wonderful standard you have set amongst Australia's music mags. I have found your news, views, interviews and reviews to be the most informative and entertaining among all the mags and easily represent the best value in town (especially the subscription offer!)

Keep up the great work

J L Shiller

Aw shucks. Still there's no room for complacency

Dear Donald

I noted with some degree of amusement the 89's on Roadrunner's September cover, the featuring interview and full page picture (Incidently who is Rennie Payer? The 89's manager?)

Further amusement was obtained when I read that the 89's go through Polygram and then examined the delightful 4 page (19 20 21 and 22) Jam Poster with Polygram tucked oh so coyly in the corner.

My amusement soon turned to disgust when I re-read the Roadrunner No 3 (June 1979) Editorial which referred to, in part, the Editors (Stuart Coupe and Donald Robertson) fascinating experience of dealing with the people who's (sic) job it is to sell the product. ... Look I'll take out a full page ad each issue for 12 months if (so and so) are on the cover.

O.K. so maybe June 1979 is a long time ago and maybe the Polygram connection between the Jam overkill and the 89's overkill is a simple frightening coincidence and maybe the Stuart Coupe — CBS — Bruce Springsteen connection can be overlooked.

But maybe not.

Michael Samaras
West Wollongong
N S W

Dear Roadrunner

I noticed that no reader's letters were printed in your last ish.

Does this mean your supporters no longer have the opportunity to voice their opinions in print?

If not I would like to say that The Church album is the finest Australian recording I have listened to and Steve Kilbey has to be the best pop writer I have heard of in this country!

What's more I'm not being paid to say so!

Simon
Elwood Vic

Neither are we Simon dear, neither are we

Roadrunner

Who ever wrote The Drum page in the September 81 edition of Roadrunner made a terrible mistake that I'd like to bring to its attention. I'm referring to The Dead Kennedy's piece in which was stated that they have formed their own record company called Alternative Tentacles, the first releases on the new label will be ... I'd like to bring to its attention that the Alternative Tentacles label is as old as the first Dead Kennedys release 'California Uber Alles' and also the label of most (probably all) of their other releases. This is a fact because half of all their releases which I have are on this label, the others on Missing Link (i.e. Aust imports). The label's San Francisco Disco and you can even write to the Alternative Tentacles Divine Light Mission. Obviously you haven't got Fresh Fruit as you would have [illegible] [illegible] Johnsons Favourites — it's obvious that you belong to the latter of the Buy or Die insignia of Ralph. It seems to me that you haven't been reading your Public Servant — Did we save your life or what? You may hear this only once — Fly like a hawk, nut like a knife, keep your eye on the press, if you value your life!

Youre in nothingness
Ig Gnawed

P.S. Maybe you can do a better job T.C ???

Oh all right. The Dead Kennedy's item should have read that they were selling up their already existing label in the U.K. as part of their plan for world domination by 1983. I haven't actually got Fresh Fruit having left it at a friend's place one night and never having retrieved it. Now where did they live again ... ?

Sydney 15 8 81

Dear Roadrunner

Elijah Harley must be joking. Nuvo Bloc were accessible only to themselves, an exercise in baseless pretension and derivative ego gratification more than anything else. The live performances I saw (and there were a few, I kept going, hoping they'd get better but do you believe it, they managed to get even worse. I eventually surrendered and stayed away) left me incredulous. How I thought do they get away with that?

Why aren't the audience lynching them from the light fittings? Swing and soul? None there sport. Egotism, talking down, arrogant obscurist preaching were all present, but nothing stated or implied that could touch or excite me. They were better on record. *Atomic Fiction* were good if you ignore the vocals and the sax solo, and some tracks heard on MMM were listenable if not actually memorable.

I would venture to suggest that any speculation as to what would surface was confined to their immediate circle of friends and deluded sycophantic hangers on. I was personally bloody glad to see the last of them.

I am sure that if they ever get rid of their pretensions and were honest for a change they could achieve much. In Adelaide Nuvo Bloc were to popular music all what Redgum were (and are) to politico social folk type music. Superficial, clichéd and basically dishonest.

They deserved an article mainly for what they could have and should have been, but fawning idolisation, mindless hero worship, well I'm not sure even they will thank you for that. Then again ... ?

A. Robins
Nth Ilford NSW

P.S. What happened to John Dee's Ruined Scene this time Robertson? Been a 'the boy' again has he. Tsk tsk

A.R.

P.P.S. It would be nice to get a review of one of N.F.A.'s gigs. Maybe you could give us all the facts in a separate article where you could do them justice, give us a musical as well as a social reason why N.F.A. are one of the most important bands in the country, i.e. a gig review. Novel idea eh? A.

Phew! Opinionated letters are the best don't you think? J.D.'s Ruined Scene didn't appear cos you can't rush a genius and there will be a feature on No Fixed Address real soon. Keep 'em coming lads

Dear Roadrunner

Well finally someone has written an article on The Singles. Scott Matheson expresses my own feelings about this very talented but underrated band. I [illegible] Singles don't attract large audiences and why they should have to support inferior bands like the 89's and The Sets (who carry their audience with them) it annoys me, so I can imagine how they must feel!

Their two records are two of the best in it's around. Everyone of their songs is a potential No. 1. The Singles are No. 1. I think I would sacrifice my dancing space to see The Singles get the success they deserve.

Signed,

A Fan
Sydney N S W

How does one sacrifice one's dancing space I wonder?

Dear Ed

Fantastic! Who is the man called Scott Matheson? Apart from the horribly clicheish singles Going steady headline — I was impressed with out doubt of his rave on The Singles. I was beginning to wonder if I was alone in my beliefs of they're gonna be big one day for that I'm sure. Lets face it that Mr Matheson's alright he said everything in that article I'd been telling me n others for eons. Love the line 'Go and see the Singles fast and grow up with them' one question — who did the photos? Dunno who he is — but he (or she) really captured what each person in the best band in town is really like. Thanks man. True talent finally recognised — shame it took so long.

Regards
Allan Sydney

Ah yes, and you won't be happy until you're overrun by the mindless many legged beast. Solution? Go see THE UNITS

J D

Dear Mr Robertson

I have to hand your application for a press pass for the Grand Final but regret that owing to the welter of applications for press passes we are unable to issue one to you.

Yours sincerely
Ian Johnson
Secretary
Melbourne Cricket Club
Jolimont

Dear Roadrunner

The August issue of Roadrunner was the first I have read for some time and the standard seems to have dropped considerably.

The articles attributed to John Dee were as ridiculous as they were unacceptable. His Royal wedding tirade was contrived and tedious, and the Units/Shreds review contrived and parochial. I am no Royalist and only watched the wedding out of curiosity — most would agree that it was a media non-event and anything but a panacea for the British people. However the playground smuttiness of his article was merely self indulgence — certainly not evidence of a worthwhile opinion. Likewise his gushing Tivoli review.

The Larry Buttrose review of Midnight Oil was a laughable misnomer. It waffled on about every and any thing but the band itself. Something must be wrong when a writer waxes poetic about Bruce Springsteen during a review of Midnight Oil at the Marquee.

Apart from the Oz Crawl gap the other articles were okay. It's just disappointing to see such poor journalism featured so prominently.

Yours etc
Paul Zilsing
St Kilda Vic

See what becoming a young home buyer does to you? Turns you into a bleeding Royalist. Maybe you can resurrect one of your Nasty Nigel's chestnuts & rename it 'John Dee's Suicide' ... oh ho don't look now

ROADRUNNER

EDITOR & PUBLISHER:
Donald Robertson

ADVERTISING
Lyn Saunders (02) 358 3366

OFFICE
Giles Barrow

SYDNEY EDITOR:
Scott Matheson
(02) 211 3180

MELBOURNE EDITOR:
Adrian Ryan (03) 347 3991

BRISBANE:
David Pastorius

PERTH:
Michael Mullane

LONDON:
Keith Shadwick, Larry Buttrose, Chris Salewicz

NEW YORK
Rerl Phillips

CONTRIBUTORS:
Stan Coulter, Jenny Esther, Earl Gray, Tyrone Flex, Span Hanna, David Langsam, Adrian Miller, Ruthven Martinus, Craig N. Pearce, Bracen Walsh.
DESIGN & LAYOUT:
And Productions — Richard Turner, Kate Monger, (08) 223 4206.

TYPESETTING:
SA Typecentre 211 6611

DISTRIBUTION:
Gordon A Gotch for Australia and New Zealand

PRINTER:
Bridge Press, Seventh St.,
Murray Bridge, S.A. 5253
Ph: (085) 32 1744.

Recommended retail price — $1.00

ROADRUNNER is registered for posting as Publication No. SBF 1813

HEAD OFFICE:
2 College Road,
KENT TOWN S.A. 5067.
Ph . (08) 42 3040.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

495 Military Road
Grange S.A

The Road Runners Assoc
Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to make enquiries about a club or association which promotes altitude running. My elderly father is interested in running as a sporting exercise.

Are you able to inform me of any club which he could join on the side of Adelaide? At present he does all his running solo and he is aged 77 years and would be better with company.

Thank you for your attention to this enquiry.

Yours sincerely
M R Goodhart

Surely some mistake here?

—Gecko

Michael Chugg Presents

featuring
MIRROR MIRROR
&
THEY WON'T LET MY GIRLFRIEND TALK TO ME

THE NEW ALBUM

OUT NOW

TOUR DATES

SEPTEMBER
21 GRAIN STORE MELBOURNE
22 EUREKA HOTEL GEELONG
23 PROSPECT HILL MELBOURNE
24 ARMIDALE HOTEL MELBOURNE
25 VILLAGE GREEN HOTEL MELBOURNE
26 SENTIMENTAL BLOKE HOTEL MELBOURNE
29 HERDSMAN HOTEL PERTH
30 NOOKENBURRA

OCTOBER
1 RAFFLES HOTEL PERTH
2 WHITE SANDS HOTEL PERTH
3 MORLEY PARK HOTEL PERTH
4 NOOKENBURRA HOTEL PERTH

OCTOBER
7 WHYALLA
8 11 SINATRA'S ADELAIDE
13 19 NEW ZEALAND
23 24 SYDNEY
26-Nov 1 MELBOURNE

NOVMBER
3 18 NEW SOUTH WALES
19-29 QUEENSLAND

TEDDY BOYS PICNIC 3005

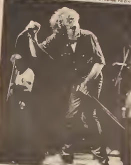
ALSO AVAILABLE 'NOT LIKE ANYBODY ELSE' [illegible]

Festival

Avenue

THE DRUM

James Barnes Pic Eric Algra



CHISEL IN AMERICA DAUNTED BUT RESOLUTE

While their album *East* didn't exactly set the Billboard or Cashbox charts alight, Cold Chisel manager Rod Willis says the first American tour by the band was a qualified success.

"The album had already died in the charts before we even got over there," he said. "But we had a really good agent — we were getting really good money and really good billing. We actually turned down two months work to get back here."

The reason for the rush? Well Chisel are already working on demos for their first studio album in nearly eighteen months. They will only be playing one date this year (Darwin on October 11th) but will go out on the road in January for a three month Australian tour which will be immediately followed by a return trip to the States.

The twenty American dates included six with Ted Nugent, who according to Willis was knocked out by the band, a couple with Joe Walsh, some with Marshall Tucker and a couple with the Joe Ely Band, who Willis felt were the most exciting band he saw over there. (There's even a whisper that the Ely band will support Chisel on their Australian tour, as Icehouse Simple Minds.)

According to most American pundits, the reason for the album's lack of sales despite airplay on 120 stations was its variety. Is variety that much of a problem?

"It has to be made easy for them (the Americans)," says Willis. "The industry over there feels it has to formulate. If you're doing more than one style of music they get confused."

Another factor Willis cited was the American record company (Elektra). "Because they didn't have an investment in the album (it was paid for by WEA Australia) they didn't push it as much as they might have — and we didn't have the say that we have in this country when we deal with the record company.

"But Elektra will have an investment in the next album so it should be better the next time round.

"Obviously next time we go we'll have a much better idea of what to expect. We were learning all the time on this one. But we now have a reputation as a shit hot support act. Promoters are asking for the band and we got an encore every time we played. I'm fairly happy."

Donald Robertson

Bob The Mouth Geldof will make his acting debut in the movie of Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. Geldof has the lead role, a character called Pink, in the movie which commenced shooting late last month in London under the direction of Alan Parker. The film's screenplay has been written by Floyd member Roger Waters and will include live footage from Floyd's extravagant series of concerts at London's Earls Court earlier this year.

The Boomtown Rats have just completed their new album, recorded on the Mediterranean island of Ibiza. Release is scheduled for January 1982. Could it be the lynchpin the new psychedelic movement has been waiting for?

· ·

The Birthday Party single *Release The Bats* is at the time of writing No 1 on the British independent singles charts for the third consecutive week. Manager Keith Glens (of Missing Link Records) flew out to London late last month to co-ordinate publicity for the band's European and American tours.

· · ·

Icehouse have completed their English dates with Simple Minds and the two bands are currently in the United States. At the moment the return tour to Icehouse with Simple Minds as special guests is possible in for November. A new single from the band has just been released. It's called *Love In Motion* b/w *Goodnight Mr Matthews*.

Adelaide young hopefuls the Screaming Believers (they've just changed their name from The Shreds) will be releasing a four track live E.P. later this month. The songs will be *Surf's Up With The Ayatollah*, *Show Me Your Money*, *Don't Talk Of Love* and *Can't Let You Go Home*, all recorded at the band's personal lounge room cum pub, the Union Hotel, where they have been virtually Saturday night residents since early this year.

· · ·

Album's up and coming: John Foxx *The Garden*, Ultravox *Rage In Eden*, Joan Armatrading *Walk Under Ladders*, Heaven 17 *Penthouse and Pavement*, Tom Verlaine *Dreamtime*, ComSat Angels *Sleep No More*.

· ·

Young Home Buyers, ex Adelaide now Melbourne band that features a couple of the Fabulaires, have their last single *Fast Reggae Party* released on Rough Diamond in late October. They will be playing in Adelaide to coincide with the release. The Stockings first album *Red Tango* is now released also on Rough Diamond and the band will be undertaking a Sydney tour early this month.

PAM labelled as a "shabby Australian pop paper" by Paul Morley in a Kim Wilde story in NME.

Red Gum currently recording their third album at the Music Farm in northern N.S.W. It's due for release in November and the band will be undertaking a national tour to coincide, kicking off in Perth in the second week of November.

·

Wrong Side Of The Road, the road movie featuring Aboriginal bands No Fixed Address and Us Mob, picked up the jury prize at the Australian Film Awards last month. The movie and accompanying soundtrack album will go on general release in early November.

· · ·

Nuvo Bloc, the not-officially defunct Adelaide Techno poppers, will have a four track cassette released through Smash and Grab this month. The four tracks are *Western Drugs*, *Equal Education*, *I'm a Rock* and *Beaten to a Pulp*.

· ·

The Units returning to Adelaide for dates in November.

· ·

Jumpers have lost drummer David Lennen. His replacement is ex Desperate Measures stickman Andy Mills. Guitarist Michael Menoney, also ex Desperate Measures, seems also likely to join (the band haven't had a guitarist up 'til now).

·

Midnight Oil's new album *Place Without A Postcard* will be released on their own Sprint label, with distribution through C.B.S.

Rodriguez, who for some strange and inexplicable reason has a fanatical cult following in this country, will be returning for a national tour in October kicking off with a headlining spot at the Tenelom Festival and taking in Adelaide, Launceston, Hobart, Sydney, Canberra, Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane, Lismore and Newcastle.

Prince Melon Records will be releasing the Huang Chung double A-side single *Grand Life For Fools and Idiots/Beat Up the Old Shack*. Huang Chung, who have been turning the odd head here and there in London (they've worked with the Birthday Party a couple of times) have amongst their numbers Ian Olive Olson and John Murphy, who once upon a time were Melbourne's Whirlywirld (with Model Andrew Duffield).

Prince Melon also plan to release a single from Brisbanites Out Of Nowhere, who have just completed a series of Sydney dates with Laughing Clowns, and a new single and album from the Clowns themselves before the end of the year.

· ·

Max Merritt and the Meteors will be back treading the boards after a long absence this month. They'll be in Queensland in the early part of the month, N.S.W. in the latter and Victoria in the first half of November. Max, now resident in Los Angeles, will be completing an album with Billy Thorpe, also back in the country for live work while both of them are here.

Bye-bye TAGG, hello Afterwork? Now that's funny, where have I heard that name before?

Yes TAGG, the pocket sized gig guide published by Mick Patchett, is now a supplement to father Jack Patchett's TOORAK TIMES. Interesting thing is that there was a publication called Afterwork put out in Melbourne a while back by none other than controversial David L. Langsam. According to Langsam he was not contacted about the resurrection of the name. We await developments with interest.

The first issue of the new Afterwork has a scurrilous little column called Janice On Her Back Again (no writer's credit naturellement!). The writer, using the term in its widest possible sense, doesn't seem to like Craig N. Pearce.

> Oh yes, death to Craig N Pearce the king of mass masturbatory journalism, go work for the stick book baby, we don't need you spurting out of rock mags the go-betweens write up is worse than my undies after a long weekend. Blow you a kiss.

The feeling is probably mutual.

CASSETTES

FIRST ADELAIDE RELEASE!

DIE DANCING BEARS C-001 $2.99
SNAKES & ADDERS C-100 $3.99
AND AT LAST
SYSTEMS GO C-101 $4.99

AVAILABLE FROM LEADING RECORD STORES
OR
FILL IN THE COUPON AND SEND TO

GIRL BOY PRODUCTIONS
P.O. BOX 1591
G.P.O. ADELAIDE 5001

PLEASE RUSH ME THE FOLLOWING

C 001 ☐ C-100 ☐ C 101 ☐
(INDICATE QUANTITY IN BOX)

I Enclose my Cheque/Money Order for $

NAME

ADDRESS

P/CODE

Robert Angus Gary Ingrid and Dave

TACTICS PROGRESS REPORT

by TYRONE FLEX

Keep your ears to the ground! Tactics are on the move again and Phase 3 is [illegible] statement. The shift from Canberra and subsequent inner-city Sydney thrashings unveiled the grim David Studdert as the 'wailing ban[illegible] thrasher of Japanese guitars, Rover Robert Wittle on skins with shells and bassist Geof Marsh all crammed behind the bar at the Sussex Hotel [illegible] was almost too much for even the most mobile of the Darlinghurst speed set. Phase 2 added the necessary counter balance in Ingrid Speilman's quartzite tinkling and the aura of distinction began to crystalize. A black vinyl halo of awesome dimensions appeared in December 80 after 8 months of failed engineers and obstructive dilemas. Soon after 'My Houdini's' definitive rope trick Gary Manley, an ex Popular Mechanic was asked to park his pick over the bass strings and so things appeared the present position.

New songs, new tests and a breathing in yet tightening up of musical potential all this and more without the usual consumptive song and dance. The new album 'Glebe' by name is already 8 days in the pipeline with only the vocals and an extra guitar or two to add ('We're really quite professional when we have to be' (chuckle) Ingrid) and the live end has just hauled itself through 5 nights in that sheltered testing ground known affectionately as Adelaide.

For Tactics 5 in a row was an unusual experience but it proven that mettle made multitudinous new friends (though not exactly a box office hit) and polished up the latest Tactic's tendencies. Would you believe while maintaining their traditional manic flare this bunch can really funk n swing with the weirdest. It's hard to describe and delightfully unex[illegible] vant Sydneysiders might have felt it coming.

The plan from here on into Christmas is relatively simple. The album will be finished and pressed as soon as poss. assuming engineer Alister can avoid another crack-up. And organiser of performance arrangements (the closest Tactics come to a manager) Roger Grierson will then throw the whole entourage into a tour including northern NSW (late Oct), Canberra, Melbourne (Nov 11) and Adelaide (Nov 15) — real whirlwind stuff. Also after (or maybe before) the album's release there'll hopefully be another video clip thrust under Molly's nose. The last one was all to be, not anything we're not, just a clip of something we were (Ingrid again) and hopefully this time the TV public will put its money where its marbles are.

On stage and in studio the new songs should sound a little more straight forward, with everybody playing less but better. One obvious focal point is still Dave's voice and writing genius but that weight is balanced by one gritty propulsive rhythm section, deft chordal mashing and melodic work by both Angus and Ingrid. And all is pervaded by relationships that encourage flexible stability.

Internal chemistry will change and strengthen in this next period ironing out various technical problems with patience, consistency and money. But the ball-game is moving into new spheres that'll give Tactics a crack at broader [illegible] that manic crack that keeps things fun and on the edge.

speedboat

Speedboat formed as a band when two of the most original Adelaide bands in 1980 broke up earlier this year namely The Lounge and Systems Go. Arnold Strahls (Systems Go), Jamie West, Lochlen Colquhoun (both from The Lounge) and Andy Mills (Desperate Measures) were the instigators. Members have been lost and collected over the past four months and the band now has seven members and one guest. The impressive line-up is Arnold (guitar vocals lyrics) Jamie (guitar lyrics) Nigel Sweeting (bass) Tom Stelick (drums) Craig Tidswell (Sax Flute) Steve Matters (trombone piano) Roger Ellis (trumpet percussion) and Hew Lewis (guest piano vocals lyrics). All of them are very experienced musicians who feel the need to keep playing interesting music.

The band prefers not to label their music with any particular style or direction but rather have collectively produced a multi-directional mixture of new diverse sounds varying from more music with dirge like songs to *Cabaret Pop*.

What makes the band so different is its movement away from a guitar base using instead a brass section as an integral part of the music rather than as an accessory. This gives the band a big clear sound. Songs such as *"Sarah Rann"*, *"The Monk's a Punk"* and *"Plenty of Soap"* all illustrate the variety of music offered by the band.

Many of the members feel that Speedboat is a natural progression for them. Musically they are influenced by their previous bands and by styles of music ranging across Classical and Jazz to strange music.

All too often art rock bands become self indulgent and forget their audience but Speedboat use performance pieces such as the breaking of an umbrella or a game of tennis to entertain and enhance the visual effect.

Speedboat is not a band for the masses but it does offer an alternative for those interested in progressive music. The only thing that could be working against Speedboat is its multi-directional nature which must present some problems.

Eva Beauclerk

Farmer Giles & John Buchan reputedly 2 of the Feral Cats.

Feral Cats in the Gleaming are the latest insiders' tip for Melbourne's megacult status before the end of the year. Their very limited edition cassette 'Slaintheah – Vhahr' is already a legendary and treasured artyfact around Melbourne's art college-club scenario and rumours of an impending first gig have been sweeping Chapel St boutiques Lygon St coffee shops and Flemington racecourse these past couple of weeks.

However don't be surprised if you don't get an invite. The word is that Feral Cats in the Gleaming will be playing a series of unannounced party gigs before actually exposing themselves to the public eye. In the meantime work is [illegible] on the recording of a follow-up to the phenomenally rare 'Slaintheah – Vhahr' tape. Someone who recently had the privilege of visiting the Cats recording studio somewhere in the Dandenong Ranges described the music being created as a shimmering swooning aural swap of primeval rhythms with stark outcrops of rumbustious rockability, heaving jazz tinged electro pop reggae and whimsical yet devastatingly accurate lyrical observations of the human condition.

For more information on the Cats just ask the person standing next to you at the bar next time you go see the Hunters and Collectors at the Jump Club.

STAGE B – BELFAST'S FLIP SIDE

Belfast, Northern Ireland ...

Television concentrates on its riots and hunger deaths and ignores its other face distorting the place into a spooky space. Belfast has beast but it also has beauty. And a healthy alternative to politics scene based around WINKERS – a regular gay music spot in the Dunne [illegible] Arms pub Corporation Street. STAGE B are the resident band playing Thursdays and Saturdays. The crowd is loud and loyal filling and cramming the small upstairs bar that is Winkers. The music is heavy almost 'art style' 77 punk – with modifications. Choppy off beat riffing short, short leadbreaks, soundless sonic sections, heavy backbeat, basic bass energy singing dancing and lyrics like 'Stop this time the sweating of the mind we want recall recall recall to life.' That song RECALL TO LIFE was released a year ago on the SHOCK ROCK label a local company. 1000 copies were pressed most have been sold – a tribute to Stage B's popularity in Belfast. The song has picked up some airplay on BBC TWO and recently the band appeared on ROCK IN THE CITY – an Ulster Television production which presents a half hour of locally recorded live music every Friday night at 10.15 p.m.

Good sounds are the oasis here in the mirage is one comment on rock in Belfast. Other bands playing around are THE TRIAL, SAIGON, 'BIG SELF' and PIG.

Hopefully the scene will grow even more and swallow more sand. Then maybe Belfast could become newsworthy for breaking silence with music not violence.

Jonathan Smith

"Due to a typographical error in the "Too Fast For You/The Church" double single package advertisement (Roadrunner September 1981) the recommended retail price was incorrectly quoted as $1.25. This should have read $2.25. EMI Records apologises for any inconvenience this may have caused."

SNAKES ALIVE!

Seeing new faces on the stage is always a delight in the rather incestuous Adelaide music scene (that game of who can play in-the-most bands for-the-shortest time).

One of the new bands is Snakes and Adders playing a style of music Adelaide hasn't heard for a long time (if ever). The band describes their music as Swing with exotic rhythms. Guitarist Paul Cordial [illegible] described the original Swing [illegible] band. Jazz and Latin American rhythms are also a strong influence. On stage the band is bright and extroverted making it enjoyable both to dance and listen to. They like to create a party atmosphere.

Most of the vocal work is done by Liz Aldridge. She has an attractive stage presence and a good voice. Songs such as Onions and Ants highlight the vivacious and witty approach the band has towards their music.

Instrumentals play an important part in Snakes and Adder's performances. Listen for their arrangement of Mancini's 'Baby Elephant Walk'. Nik Felps' saxophone is often the up front instrument, but he prefers not to be seen as the leader of the band. It works more as a collective. Paul Cordial and Simon Ashl (percussion and guitar) also write material. Nik feels this input is vital to give the band greater variety in style.

For many of the members this is their first performing band and they are still testing their feet. Nik therefore being the most experienced performing musician (he played sax with the first line up of Nuvo Bloc) often finds himself with the job of giving direction to the band. However he feels that with increased experience and confidence the band will function as an even closer unit.

More percussion, more original material (especially in the Latin American vein) and more good times are in store for Snakes and Adders in the future.

This band will surprise you when you hear them for the first time. Keep an eye out for them. I promise you won't be disappointed. Their cassette put out by new Adelaide label Girl Boy Records will be available early in October (for those who'd like to take the band home).

Eva Beauclerk

umbrella music

Upstairs,
Cnr. Frome and Rundle St
City

ADELAIDE'S SECOND
HAND RECORD STORE
We buy your unwanted
records and tapes. See us
now for the best price
in town

LARGE STOCK
OF INDEPENDENT
SINGLES AVAILABLE

NEW L.P.s
SCIENTISTS
DAVID CHESWORTH
SUNNY BOYS 12" E.P.
MODERN ENGLISH import
WIRE Live

NEW SINGLES
SAGOES TEN YEARS ON
SURFSIDE 6
LITTLE MURDERS
TRIFFIDS
JUMPERS EP
FOREIGN BODY
GO BETWEENS

TAPES
THE LOUNGE $5
DIE DANCING BEARS $2.50
NOUMENON COMPILATION $5
URBAN GUERRILLAS $3.50
NME-ROUGH TRADE $11.50

RECORD FACTORY
FOR MUSIC

RUNDLE ARCADE BEHIND D Js

BUCK OFF

all local records & cassettes

THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE
RANGE OF AUSTRALIAN & ENGLISH
INDEPENDENT LPs AND SINGLES
IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Including all Ralph Lps, 4AD GAP, MISSING LINK, PHANTOM, ROUGH TRADE, POSTCARD, ARGO GO, GREASY POP,
F F CASSETTE MAG, SWAMI LP

FM
2MMM

"Because your ears have brains"

STEREO 105 FM

FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO TANGO

THE STOCKINGS

·RED TANGO·

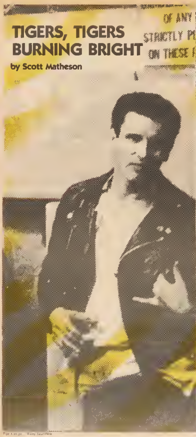
The Debut Album
Featuring 'Good Luck'
and '(She's a) Devil'

PRODUCED BY DAVID BRIGGS

ASTOR

TIGERS, TIGERS BURNING BRIGHT

by Scott Matheson



Tiger's singer Barry Saunders

For quite a few years now New Zealand bands have played an almost disproportionately large part in the general Australian rock scene. Everyone knows of the big ones like Dragon and Split Enz. Then there were the not so big ones like Hello Sailor and Toy Love. Recently another band has followed that well worn path across the Tasman sel to have a crack at the Australian rock and roll market. Usually they've outgrown their home and need a challenge, a change of scenery, a shot of something new. Such was the case with the Tigers. When there's only about 15 good venues in the whole of New Zealand there's a limit to how far you can go. Though not the biggest band in that country by any means, they did have a top 20 hit with a song called Red Dress. After that they packed their bags and came to Sydney. Funny thing happened, they moved into a house opposite mine.

I'm sitting in an upstairs room of the terrace with Nick Theobald, their songwriter and bass player, and Barry Saunders, their vocalist. Strange business interviewing your neighbours. Still it makes for a pleasant atmosphere. Nick and Barry are friendly and articulate and approach the music business with a realism born of quite a few years collective experience.

Though the Tigers are a relatively new band, formed 18 months ago in Wellington, Nick and Barry have seen the trends come and go. That maybe explains their music a little. It's almost untouched by fads and mavemania pop music completely. The closest I could come to a comparison would be the Records but without the pomp of that band. Songs with titles like Heart Don't Stop and Please Be Mine are almost self explanatory. They're a song band, not a music band. That's always a point in anyone's favour as far as I'm concerned. Instantly catchy choruses abound and the lyrics run the gamut of human emotions. There are no terribly startling revelations or new perspectives revealed but Nick's lyrics are often deeply personal and that's what counts.

New Zealand is not too often in the news, the Springbok controversy make for a rare exception. It must seem isolated. Often Australia feels like that to me. Says Barry:

I don't think it suffers from being remote, although a lot of people think it does. I mean if you live in the Mid West of America you might as well be on the moon. See you know more about what's going on when you're in New Zealand than almost anywhere. People are quite paranoid about it. They buy a lot of records and when they come along to hear you they've listened to a hell of a lot of bands.

That's one thing that happens in New Zealand: movements become very radical. People are so worried about being out of touch they're more in touch than people who are in touch, if you know what I mean.

Do New Zealand bands view Australia the way Australian bands look at America, the next big step?

Well it's somewhere to try yourself out on.

A lot of New Zealand bands come over here.

Yes they do. A few of them have been very successful and that kind of helps. People say New Zealand bands do well in Australia and we start believing it after a while. You come over here and you're fairly fresh. You've got certain ideas about what you do and what you listen to.

And that could be why so many New Zealand bands do well in Australia. They come over here with their acts pretty well complete. I think I'd add then that Brisbane or Adelaide bands for instance can't do the same sort of thing. After all, Brisbane and Adelaide are fairly comparable in size with Auckland and far larger than Wellington, the Tigers home town. Well Adelaide has some historical claim to fame I suppose but the Saints apart Brisbane has none.

But back to the Tigers. The music on their debut album is heavily rooted in melody, a little lightweight maybe. Sydney has caused them to toughen up, put a bit more emphasis on beat, and tighten up their musicianship though Nick points out that is not their chief concern. I'd say song writers in New Zealand are better than in Australia but musicianship is better over here. That's why I like English music, the emphasis is on songs. New Zealand's a bit like that.

Do they intend staying in Sydney for good?

Yes at the moment. But then there's a lot to be said for living where you were brought up, that feeling you get when you're abroad. (Both Nick and Barry spent a lot of time in England.)

So how do they feel when they see New Zealand torn asunder by the Springbok controversy, Barry: Well we've got pretty fixed ideas on that one. I said to a friend of mine in Wellington the tour must be causing a bit of a storm over there. And he said yeah, Jenny, she's his wife, will be going in the demo tomorrow. And they're middle class protesters who'll never be anything outrageous. I mean the only way they could have stopped the bloody tour would have been to kidnap someone and say stop the tour or I'll pull the trigger and they would have stopped the tour pretty fast. I reckon you've got to fight a radical situation in a radical fashion. The protests came from the heart but they didn't get what they wanted.

Adds Nick, Although it was pretty extreme for New Zealand. It's quite a conservative sort of country, a very repressed place. We were pleased to get out. I think New Zealand is a wonderful country. But just at the moment the political/cultural climate is at an all time low.

Sounds like a familiar story doesn't it? But Labor won the state election yesterday and I'm still recovering from last night's celebrations. I'm happy and for the time being we'll skip the world problems. Plenty of time for that later too. Let's get on to more pressing matters.

The Tigers album should be in the shops about the same time as this magazine hits the streets. It's a good album, a collection of neat pop songs, mostly mid paced, all catchy and well worth a listen. The new single Don't Wanna Go Home stands out especially. Acoustic guitar begins quietly, then it builds to a brooding, powerful piece. It could be the Tigers couldn't. Starting quietly but building all the time

SUNNYBOYS

A GREAT ALBUM BY
A GREAT BAND.........

album out now on mushroom records and tapes

NEW YORK NEW YORK

by Kez Phillips

GRACE JONES

HAIRCUTS AND HANDCUFFS

Grace Jones appeared for one night only in New York's classiest venue, the Savoy. Grace oh Grace! Possibly the most amazing looking individual to get up on a rock stage ever. Once the darling of the gay disco scene in the days before anyone had heard of John Travolta, she has managed, with a little help, to make the leap into the big straight world with two excellent albums — *Warm Leatherette* (1980) and *Nightclubbing* (1981).

Both discs feature a dizzy constellation of great Jamaican reggae players including the number one rhythm section, Sly Dunbar (drums) and Robbie Shakespeare (bass). Under the watchful eye of Island Records boss Chris Blackwell (reggae buff and heir to the British Blackwell jam fortune) this conglomeration has created a unique blend of disco and reggae rhythms while treating often with songs more properly belonging to the avant end of British music. The first of these two recent LPs featured versions of Chrissy Hynde's *Private Life*, Bryan Ferry's *Love Is The Drug*, Tom Petty's *Breakdown* and *Warm Leatherette* (a song of supreme black humour written and recorded originally by The Normal (Daniel Miller), owner of the tiny British label Mute Records). *Nightclubbing* saw Jones take care of Bowie and Iggy's song of that name and Sting's *Demolition Man*. But it was the songs she had a hand in writing that are the pearls on these records. *Bullshit* on the first and *Pull Up To The Bumper* (one of the big summer hits on the streets of New York this year) allow Jones to exploit that powerful persona that makes you forget that technically her voice is not all it could be. Her strong sultry delivery and her super sophistication (God she sings in French!) give her performances a dangerous, emotional, exotic edge that thrills.

A great deal of care has gone into the making of the Grace Jones image. A recent piece in one of the New York papers made much of the fact that Jones' current amour Jean Paul Goude is a man with an obsession for collecting black women with amazing bone structures. (There is a story of a former black girlfriend — a model like Grace — whose facial perfection was marred by a slightly out of place jaw-line. She walked out the door when Goude offered her the money to have it operated on.) Goude seems, however, to have exerted a very positive influence on the Jones career. He does her hair and her make up and he takes those photos of Grace that appear on the albums and in the music papers. He is also the creative producer of the current G.J. show. Quite a contribution for a man who has to bear the ignominy of being forever "Grace Jones' boyfriend".

With such a team, however, it is not surprising that Grace Jones' Savoy show is both ambitious and stylish. No-one expected her to turn up with the musicians who worked on the LPs but she did give us more than just backing tapes by way of music. All the vocal choruses and most of the instruments were on tape but she was accompanied by a couple of percussionists who played all manner of drums, whistles, bells and other rhythm instruments. But this talk of the music is really to detract from the actual focus of the show which was largely visual. The curtain lifted to reveal black box-like platforms dividing the stage into areas to be used in different ways. At the top of the boxes stood a tall figure in a gorilla suit, with a small grass skirt and a little tin drum hanging from a strap around its neck. As the opening bars of *Nightclubbing* emerged from the speakers the figure started beating out a tattoo on the drum. At the appropriate moment the gorilla's head was removed to reveal the severely cropped head of Grace Jones. And that was just for openers!

Each number had its own motif and dramatic surprises. For *Feel Up* the lights came up on Grace playing a big conga drum centre stage, wearing an enormous bright red hat and matching lips. A second Grace appeared and joined in on another conga. Then a third Grace — and we realized that only the last was real. The other two were her percussionists. Most songs and settings worked well and we went through Bill Withers' *Use Me*, *I've Done It Again* and *Demolition Man* before anything went wrong. Jones, again up on the top of the black boxes, picked up a heavy piano accordian for one of her old numbers *La Vie*. Once she had strapped it on she realized it was upside down and, even though she was only using it as a prop, she had to get out of it and put it on right way up. About then I started to think perhaps Grace Jones might be something of a perfectionist.

For *Breakdown* she used the catwalk out into the audience (who were seated night club-style at tables). It's a great song and she does a much more powerful version of it than Petty. She had almost reached the end when an odd incident occurred. A man whose face was covered by a black scarf crawled up on the catwalk and handcuffed his arm to Jones' ankle. She seemed not to notice until the song was over and she tried to go back up the walk onto the stage and found she had some extra baggage. She reacted very aggressively — "That motherfucker's chained himself to me" — and hit him hard across the head. A key was produced and some handlers pulled the guy off. "Get him out of here" she snapped, and the unfortunate was carried outside. Now the audience went bananas. It was a moment of high tension and drama. Everyone was on their feet and Jones, apparently very shaken, reeled back to the stage to sit down. Aides rushes out with steadying drinks but she brushed them away. After a few deep breaths the show went on, most of the audience, if possible, more behind the indomitable Grace than they had been before. To a cynic like me though, the thought does occur that it was a put-up job. The timing was convenient (right at the end of a song). Help was instantly at hand. And despite Grace's fear she didn't drop the mike or forget to talk right into it. Whatever the truth here, it worked as a piece of theatre. The audience believed it and it is to Jones' credit that she had set up a situation where something like that could be believable.

She pulled out all the stops for the encores — appearing in the bottom part of the stark masculine black suit she had worn throughout and a top which looked like a hard plastic moulding of a white woman's torso. *Pull Up To The Bumper* featured an intense white search light trained on the crowd from the back of the stage. A wind machine then blew confetti all over us. Smoke and fireworks completed the blast-off for this number. *Bullshit* was the final song and we watched Grace disappear up into the roof of the stage on a platform saying "Shit shit shit" as she went.

As you can see, not your average night's rock and roll fodder, and her efforts won a strong response from the mixed audience — gays who've followed her from the old days and the post *Warm Leatherette* crowd. She makes a great play on the "feeling like a woman/looking like a man" aspect of her astounding physique — an androgynous element which is an odd juxtaposition with androgyne coming from the other direction (the singer with Japan, for example). During the song *I Need A Man* Jones selected with great deliberation a macho-looking guy from the crowd and pulled him up on the catwalk with her. She then tried to get him to take his clothes off — not terribly successfully, although the guy did make an ass of himself as you must inevitably do in such a situation. Her approach to him was one of utter contempt and it was obvious she was only interested in humiliating him.

Certainly the Grace Jones show is the most ambitious and unusual presentation of 'rock' music I've ever seen (Kid Creole and the Coconuts notwithstanding — by the way there are rumours that their *Fresh Fruit* show may make it onto Broadway sometime soon). The music itself is exceptionally exciting and the visual/theatrical aspects, tempered with a fine sense of pacing, meant that the whole thing built to a fitting climax.

BOW WOW WOW ALL BARK & NO BITE

Although there may be [illegible] doubt as to who [illegible] with her male [illegible] control there is no question [illegible] Anabella Lwin [illegible] of Bow Wow Wow. The Pistols [illegible] Malcolm McLaren is firmly in [illegible] soul. While he may not actually [illegible] the music the lyrics and overall political [illegible] the group are all Malcolm. The Sex Pistols were always beyond McLaren's total control. Rotten was his own perverse man. Sid was utterly in the thrall of the rock n roll myth and the other two tossers were just in it for the laughs. But Bow Wow Wow's relationship with McLaren is much more like that of Presley with Colonel Parker or perhaps those girl groups with Phil Spector. It's clearly illustrated when the band shows up for their first New York performance. The local magazines run interviews with McLaren not the band.

Except for one paper which features as its centrefold the banned record cover/promotional shot with Anabella in the nude and the group posed in imitation of the Manet painting *Dejeuner sur l'herbe* (which caused a lot more fuss when it was unveiled in 1863 than the coy nude shot of Anabella would create today). The story goes that the photo cannot be used because Anabella's mother has applied pressure on the record company and they have promised not to use the photo. How nice of them! I'm afraid I cast a rather doubtful eye on the uses to which Anabella's poor mother has been put. She is supposed to be the reason for the cancellation of both a British tour and the originally scheduled U.S. debut of the band last spring. They say she has refused to let Anabella tour unless she has a tutor. I also treat dubiously McLaren's assertion that she's 15. The nude photo, the mother and the nymphet image are merely all part of Malcolm's latest attempt to interest and manipulate the media in gaining the sort of free publicity for Bow Wow Wow that the Pistols had. While approval must be given to the using of the mass media to [illegible] dissemination of subversive ideas (and the Pistols were terrifyingly good at it) [illegible] the only message here is that [illegible] middle-aged men in raincoats can get any day of the week in adult bookshops around the world. Hardly revolutionary.

As for Bow Wow Wow's show at the R[illegible]. They pulled a good sized crowd but did not seem to know what to do with them. The three musicians in Bow Wow Wow used to be Adam Ant's band (you remember when Malcolm came back from self imposed exile in Paris after the Pistols, he took on Adam and the Ants then a hopelessly failed punk band and it looked like he was going to use them for his Machiavellian schemes. But he gave Adam the old heave-ho — probably the best thing that ever happened to Adam — and drafted Anabella in with the remaining Ants). In their fringe-New Romantic gear the old Ants provide an African drum influenced tribal backing not unlike that hooked up by the current Ants. Anabella unfortunately cannot sing. Most of the material does not assume that she can — she more or less speaks the lyrics. But her woefulness is revealed when she massacres the Brook Benton classic of 1960 *Fools Rush In* — painfully out of tune. The sound is horrible, everything distorted which probably doesn't help. Never mind! She looks great and she has two other girls on stage to dance with her and it's all bright and poppy and fun and things. The problem is that she has in no way bridged the gap between band and audience. It's almost like there's a big glass wall up there on the edge of the stage. And there's not much communication between members of the band either. The audience — an odd breed of New Yorker that slavishly follows the London music and fashion scene — tonight kitted out in New Romantic attire and looking good — (until they open their mouths) takes it all in without much response. Only people within the first ten rows or so actually clap. The rest just stand there. Obviously all this is as much a mystery to them as the British punk thing was.

In spite of all McLaren's machinations and the goodwill earned by the genuine quality of Bow Wow Wow's recorded music this is little more than cheerful danceable pop — always welcome but a little anti climatic after all the trumpeting by the putative Svengali.

STUDIO 54 REOPENS

Now — the big news to celeb watchers — those who had put off their trip to New York because Studio 54 (or Studio as it's known amongst the elite) had been closed. You can now get out and get that ticket as soon as you like. Studio 54 is open for business. The new operators Jim Fourrat and Rudolph (who likes to be known by his first name only but whose last name is Prepper) are well known on the New York club scene having opened and closed a string of clubs in Manhattan over the last few years. Hurrah was theirs — the first rock disco in New York and launching pad for many new British bands in this city — from Wire to Dexy's Midnight Runners. Fourrat and Rudolph ran Danceteria the club of the summer of 80 and they reopened the Peppermint Lounge. Now they've got Studio 54 and they have a liquor license only on condition that the former owner Steve Rubell, now out of gaol after his term for tax evasion was reduced from three and a half years to a paltry twenty months, has nothing to do with the place. Looks like the new boys are keen to keep the hip image but do away with the debauched drug soaked degeneracy that attached itself to Studio 54 during Rubell's reign.

THE EVENT occurred on September 15th, a wet night, one of those nights when the sky opens up and empties its contents endlessly. It turned out to be rather like a rerun of the Day of the Locusts. Eleven thousand invitations had been sent out, the assumption being that many would not show (especially since it cost $25 to get in with invitation) and that those that did would spread themselves out over the eight hours that the club is open. Boy were they wrong! In spite of the rain crowds jammed the street blocking it to taxis and limos trying to ferry in further loads of beautiful people. Among the notables were Mary Tyler Moore, Jack Nicholson, James Taylor, Brooke Shields and mother and Christopher Reeve — who used the exclusive back entrance, fought his way through the crowd, walked through the door and into the night. Superman indeed! Many more no one spent the night moving around other trendy watering holes returning to Studio 54 every so often to see if the crowd at the door had thinned any. Eventually those on the door gave up trying to collect either tickets or money and just let people in for free.

I must admit to a certain amount of surprise over the response. What could be more boring than trying to resurrect this piece of ancient history — a disco that had become a [illegible] cliche and embarrassment. A club which had become more a way of testing your standing on some sort of grotesque fame scale — if you got in it was proof positive that you had MADE IT. I wonder that they did not give out badges. I had also associated Studio 54 with an older crowd — politicians and people like Andy Warhol and Norman Mailer. Given that Fourrat and Rudolph were known mostly in clubs to which these people wouldn't go the overwhelming vote of YES to the new Studio 54 (with its black walls, new paintings) which is rather unexpected. The [illegible] of opening night was however hardly evidence of an elegant phoenix rising from the ashes. As someone said it's more like a buzzard flapping its wings over the carcass of New York nightlife.

LIFE AFTER LONDON

by Keith Shadwick

It gets worse by the week: a detailed look at Top of The Pops will confirm that. The English charts have been over run by nice music. Nice is the only word which would seem to fit. All I can say is thank christ for Adam & The Ants: they came in at No 1 this week with a wonderful piss take of themselves and a video clip to go with it which is the best since Bowie's *Ashes To Ashes* classic of a year ago. Apart from that it's a full-frontal assault on music from the spin offs from Stars on 45, re makes of re makes from people like Alvin Stardust (now on Stiff would you believe) and the truly forgettable Polecats whose LP on Polygram was a stiff and whose new single *Jeepster* (yes Bolan's song) is plain sad.

Now for the biggest let down. All those key young fellows who launched the New Romantic biz earlier in the year have also now spawned the most awfully nice bunch of young masters that it makes you nauseous, the amount of confection you have to consume in order to listen to the radio at present. They all look like their mothers combed their hair for them before they left their semi detached homes in Stanmore for the TV studio. I think they must also buy their suits and slacks from Marks & Spencer or maybe Lord John's if they were feeling a little up market or their record companies just put up their retainers. In the middle of the explosion of wimps Midge Ure (who ought to know better what with the current influence Ultravox wields) tells us all that the day of the guitar is over — it's like when big bands ended in the 40's after a decade or so of being the big thing. It's a natural progression, says Midge. Well he obviously isn't too up on his music history. Big bands ended because nobody could afford to pay the wage bills after world war two and also because most of the top players had been drafted once 41 or so. It was an economic necessity, the need to change to smaller groups or to solo singers. Is anybody going to try to tell me that a bank of synthesizers is cheaper than a guitar?

Moan moan moan. It's awful to go on like this, but what else can you do? Say that yes you do actually get off on the pretentious lyrics on the latest Teardrop Explodes single? Or that you admire the efficiency with which Echo & The Bunnymen have ripped off all the more obvious aspects of Joy Division on their new LP? After that, even Spandau Ballet's *Chant No. 2* single of a month or so ago sounds great.

Amongst all this swill a few things still continue to make the grade in some way or another. Devo have a new LP out which even though the lyrics reinforce their loss of real direction is fun to listen to or even dance to. Hot Gossip the dance troupe who occasionally make records have an enjoyable single *Criminal World* which doesn't seem to be getting much airplay. The jocks would rather play *Japanese Boy*, know what I mean? Def Leppard also have a new single out which though it has most of the heavy metal cliches still has fire and life. It's called *Let It Go*. The new Desmond Dekker LP recorded in the Bahamas with Robert Palmer does Stiff proud in their attempt to resurrect his career. Human League and Heaven 17, still not talking to each other, have both come up with the goods for their new releases. And Simple Minds who have been around for quite a while have a good first LP out with Virgin. So all is not lost. There is also of course the new Comsat Angels LP *Sleep No More* — but you'll find a more detailed look at that elsewhere in this magazine.

One other item of interest to those who remember: a society or club of Marc Bolan fans have been planning to release some previously unobtainable material for a while, and this month sees two products: a very old single done in 1968 but with new backing tracks and a live LP from 1971. I've heard the single (once) on radio and it's ok. The LP is going to remain difficult to get hold of as it's one of those P.O. Box Number jobs. If I can find the address I'll include it in the next missive from Blighty. I guess they'll sell quite well as the press, both daily and music, seem to be having a publicity offensive on Bolan at present what with the new biography coming out too and all.

And that I'm afraid is where I'll have to leave it for this time. I don't want to go on because it'll only be more moaning. But then again as The Comsats say on their new disc 'everyone the whole world over lives in hope'. There's always next month isn't there? Who knows by then we might have Lulu on TOP again — I hear she's trying to prove that she's still a young with it girl. Perhaps a cover version of *Anyone Who Had a Heart* with backing by The Modern Sect might just do it. We can but dream.

ICEHOUSE

LOVE IN
MOTION

45 REGULAR

THE LAUGHING CLOWNS

Taken by [illegible]

by Craig N. Pearce

Out of the inner city sleaze regions of a couple of Sydney's more renowned suburbs a group of people known as the Laughing Clowns can sometimes be seen emerging. Either to indulge in the heighty delights that the more select doyens of entertainment in the aforementioned city can offer or to inject a personal juice of their own into the city's heavy rock bruised veins.

In a country known largely as a breeder of functional rock bands devoid of trimmings or colour, the Laughing Clowns are surely the kaleidoscope of emotion and art that can pick up perceptions, turn people around and show them that there's more to rock than flat guitar chording.

Laughing Clowns are an uplifting experience. They're not here to barrage or bland out heads by way of volume (that's merely an excuse for lack of talent). What the Clowns do is inspire by intrigue, seduce by an almost religious urge that floats beneath the sincere veneer of supple sound that shifts over the very heart of their inspiration. It's a democratic sound, a sound of intelligence and one that respects its audience's intelligence.

Heart and soul is what the Clowns are working at and working out. Ecstacy is a feeling rarely transpired yet it's a state of being that's often totally congruous with the qualities of a Clowns performance.

What began a few years ago at Ed Kuepper's instigation, after the (real) Saints had done their job as an enterprise of hope and conviction has continued from its very outset to provide music which is just as much a revolt against the Australian music industry as The Saints were. It's not often that a musical unit can provide a collection of records and go through such an extensive series of line up changes and still maintain such a high degree of intensely moving, exquisitely original and fascinatingly ever progressing collection of songs.

When asked why the band has gone through so many line up changes Ed Kuepper had this to say: "I suppose I'm a tyrant."

Then you're the main creative emphasis behind the band?

"No. I think it's shared. There's a sort of aim in the band at this stage I think, not being a 100% sure but I think this line up will be reasonably stable for a while at least. People leave. Y'know, I guess it becomes too much — the trials and tribulations."

About the band's beginning, something which I find remarkable with their consistently strong sense of direction is that there was never a set music idiom laid down at the outset of the band's activities. Asking Ed Kuepper again what sorts of things he had in mind when forming the band:

"That's really hard to put into words actually. It was more of a feeling. I'd just written songs which I'd wanted to do and I'd had some ideas. There wasn't really any cohesive sort of policy. It was just to do something which was a fairly honest sort of expression."

Concerning the much vaunted jazz background that has been persistently associated with the band and could have theoretically been considered a major reference point for the band's songs Ed had this to say:

"Yeah well. It's just something I don't want to see put in the position where its importance is greater than the reality. There's definitely a danger that it could be overblown. It's there, as is a lot of other music but it's not the main thing."

Which is quite a fair thing and true enough. One reason why it's important for the jazz(ish) influence in the Clowns not to be overlooked though is that whilst Ed and drummer Jeff Wegener reached their present vocation via a more street wise education (Jeff's prior bands including a very early Saints line up and Melbourne band The Young Charlatans — which included Rowland Howard), the remainder of the band, Peter Doyle on trumpet and french horn, Louise Elliot on saxophone and flute and Leslie Millar on basses have all received some semblance of classical training in which jazz featured heavily. They have been through a scene more attune to that of technical sense than, as in rock, a mindless thrashing of instruments. It's also interesting to note that none of the last three musicians were original members of the band. Possibly they were attracted to the possibilities that the sound presented to them — retaining some of their more formal background as well as posing the challenge of conquering some new musical spheres.

Implied by the Clown's music is a sense of natural expression and a desire to share these ideals without resorting to the rigid delineation between artist/audience that many bands go for. There's a more important reasoning behind their ever changing backdrops and the unique melancholy lighting of the Clowns than the simple (though perfectly practical, estimable and all too rare) desire to make the evening's entertainment a more original expressive one.

Peter: "A lot of lighting helps to contribute to the alienation of the band from the audience. I just think it's really pretentious to have that god up on stage thing."

Which leads to the acute awareness levels between individual band members that happily extends into the audience. There are certain sections in the songs where instruments are able to go freeform and improvise and there's even one song which is nearly wholly improvisational but basically all the numbers have technically speaking a fairly rigid structure to adhere to. What marks a great difference between the Clowns and other bands, though they themselves are keen to play down the significance of it, is their willingness to shift and alter the sound to correspond more finely with the context in which it's being performed. That is cluttering things up, playing things down, inserting a drum solo here, tripping away on a be bop break there — fitting with the audience and venue and the heat and season. Adapting, playing along with the feeling. Flicking through the ABC of mood, picking up the corresponding definition, the processing to perfect it.

Ed is sure that the band's audiences are changing as well as growing though he's worried that the band aren't getting through to as many people as is possible. Yet with the aggressively independent stance the band hold within an industry that is only too willing to make deals with only minimal consideration for the artist concerned, there is a real difficulty for the band to break into this country's consciousness any further than they already have.

There is retained in the group a strong sense of morality regarding their own and others' attitudes towards their music. The simple question, "What do you want your audience to get out of your music?" was a prelude to a fairly intense discussion about musicians' attitude towards their audiences.

Ed: "I hope basically that people just enjoy it. I mean that's the bottom line. There should be just a pleasure from hearing it. I hope we fulfil that function and at the same time operate on different levels as well."

Jeff: "I like people to look at it with as few preconceived ideas as possible and I think in a rock set up that's probably the most difficult thing to do because the whole way the industry works is to get away a lot of the time from the music. A lot of it's based on personalities and myths about personalities."

Peter: "I'd rather people see it for precisely what it is not the images that come from it or to make analogies to other things."

Jeff: "A lot of people justify their music by saying that's what people want. And that's just unbelievably arrogant.

"We're doing what we like and we're hopefully not presenting it to people with preconceived ideas and they have the opportunity to listen to it on their own level and get out of it whatever they want to."

Ed: "People just become lazy basically and they're in a position where a certain type of thing will earn them an income."

Peter: "What I'm saying is that their motivation for doing that is to earn an income as opposed to express themselves and that eventually comes out in the music."

Ralph (the roadie): "About what Jeff said — saying that you're playing what people want is implying that they can't think for themselves. It's fascist."

Jeff: "Yeah it's the basis of fascism that you assume people can't make up their own minds so you tell them. Whereas the other approach is the total opposite."

Ed: "Which is something I can say we've honestly done. We've stayed true to what we wanted to do. And over the last two years people are actually coming around to it. Without having to change what we're doing we're getting a reasonable amount of acceptance. Not that we haven't changed or progressed but we're still moving in the same direction."

· · ·

It's a shame, as Jeff says, that so much importance is invested in the trappings of the industry in such things as image and not the music itself. What makes it sadder is that the Laughing Clowns are a real audience's band. Songs are constantly being rearranged and replaced so as to keep anyone that consistently sees the band interested and inspired by what's going on (plus the fact that Ed Kuepper is convinced that he has never written anything that wasn't accessible).

Laughing Clowns are working territory that in this country could be termed, and often is, innovative. But this is misleading because technically speaking what the Clowns are doing has been well and truly documented. What hasn't been done before though is the combining of these technically proven elements with the rock and roll regime that is still the strength of the band. Songs are still written/performed around the guitar even if other instruments may seem to be the action instigators/illustrators at odd times.

By the combination of these two general worlds the Laughing Clowns have forged — Ed: "A reasonably distinctive and original sound. We're like nothing that I've heard but we're certainly not divorced from the rest of the music world."

Louise goes on to say no matter how hard you try and resist it, whatever you hear affects you in some way or another.

Jeff: "I think it's quite interesting being in Australia now as we've got accessibility to a lot of things that because of media, radio and records we're influenced by. A lot of music of whole culture. So if you want to go out and listen to all this stuff that's really entertaining you can and I find it really strange that because that accessibility is there for people the less they are interested in it and they just produce bland stuff that doesn't say anything.

"What I'm saying is a lot of rock groups actually just draw on what's been done a couple of months before."

Laughing Clowns songs don't just work on intuition or letting its song is heading towards an area they've already covered suitably then they'll move it elsewhere. And whilst there are things that anger or involve the band in the way of day to day issues such as Mr Fraser's sore throat(s) Ed sees no desire to sloganize his views across the music in a dogmatic fashion.

As a lot of the more exciting bands are doing these days, the Clowns easily acknowledge and feel greatly indebted to musicians of the past. Whereas punk was basically a superficial rejection of values and styles the Clowns think deeper about these things before either throwing them out the window or embracing them. They see no need to ignore the rich tradition of music which has been laid down before them and they eagerly utilize whatever can be of use to them.

There is a great deal of inner strength within the band. Everyone works for the common end of the music. In rehearsal and performance each member adjusts their playing and aims to suit that of the general need. No silly egotistical trips are taken and the movement of the songs has an internal bond which makes even the most subtle moment take an effect of emotion draining consciousness.

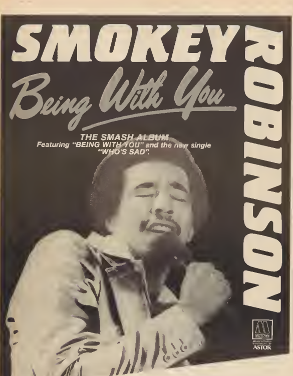
Leslie opted out of the interview I conducted with the traitor remarking that he was no good at these sort of things. Cornering him afterwards I found a man totally enamoured with his craft who's always searching for that certain sliver of magic to his inner issues, a burning instrumental one.

He uneasily talked about his past search for the music containing the real truth, the real heart of existence. In doing so he went through Coltrane, Miles, all the contemporary jazz greats. Whether or not he found what he was looking for was not made clear. What was made clear however was that the search hasn't ended and it's now taking place in his own playing and in the band.

Always the search for the most sensitive of human truths. It's almost embarrassing to talk about it. But it's there, it's fact.

That's why the bass, Les' the machine, more the extension of flesh and blood which is the key to Leslie's playing.

And it's in Leslie that we find the perfect litmus for the band. A group with sense, knowledge and more importantly a desire to come to perfect grips with those two things. Laughing Clowns have a burning desire within them that arouses in the listener a sense of sensual brooding desires to wake up, work over and wash out any mind cloying distractions that stand in the way of the search for something really strong, really timeless, really real.



SMOKEY ROBINSON

Being With You

THE SMASH ALBUM
Featuring "BEING WITH YOU" and the new single "WHO'S SAD".

MOTOWN
MANUFACTURED & DISTRIBUTED BY
ASTOR

Being With You
IN AUSTRALIA
THE TOUR

TOUR DATES

ADELAIDE	**TUESDAY 20th OCTOBER,** *Festival Theatre*
MELBOURNE	**WEDNESDAY 21st, THURSDAY 22nd, FRIDAY 23rd OCTOBER,** *Billboard*
SYDNEY	**SATURDAY 24th OCTOBER,** *The Capital Theatre*
NEWCASTLE	**SUNDAY 25th OCTOBER,** *The Civic Theatre*
BRISBANE	**MONDAY 26th OCTOBER,** *The New York Hotel*

Blow winds and crack your cheeks! rage! blow! You cataracts and hurricanes, spout til you have drench'd our Greedy, drown'd in cats & dogs.

King Lear
Act III Scene II
(apologies to Wm Shakespeare)

Greedy in front of his dad's gaff Pic — Eric Algra

After the creative and commercial disaster of *Espresso Bongo* Mental As Anything have been very careful about the preparation, production and launching of the follow up *Cats and Dogs*, released last month.

Greedy Smith, in Adelaide to coincide with the album's release, was quick to stress that everything associated with the album had been done exactly the way the band had wanted it. "If it flops we'll have no-one to blame but ourselves," he said.

But failure seemed the furthest thing from Mr Smith's mind as he rattled on lobbing punchlines like hand grenades to the assembled staff of the ROADRUNNER office.

While Greedy may claim that the Mentals suffer from Od Immey's Disease (chronic laziness) and have never improved by self motivation (it's always been an accident) it's a fact that in the long delay between albums they have retained and in some cases increased their live following while the singles *Romeo and Juliet* and *If You Leave Me* have kept their flag flying in the charts.

The softly softly catchee monkey strategy seems about to pay off. *Cats and Dogs* finds the happy go lucky mins of these ex art school Sydney-siders distilled into a pop music that has both depth and more importantly clarity.

But since Greedy's flown all the way from Sydney I'll let him tell you all about it.

"Well it's about fifty, no a hundred and fifty times better than the last one. I'll go over *Espresso Bongo* for a moment. I'll recap. Most of the songs on that were learned one and a half weeks before recording. 20 tracks were recorded in eight days. In not a too healthy state of mind you, up at the Music Farm.

In the end we didn't get what we'd set out to get. This time we learnt from our experience and judging from the standard of all the other bands around us putting out records, the quality of production and all that, we thought we'd better pull our fingers out. We decided to switch producers for a bit more of an additional input as much as anything ... we'll still probably use Cameron (Allan) again, depends what other producers are around.

We decided to switch to Russel (Dunlop) and Bruce (Brown) (a.k.a. Player One of Space Invaders (ed) fame) and it worked out quite well I think. All the songs had a lot of time to be either road tested or gone over. We started recording about six months ago and we had 2 or 3 songs 6 months before that that we did with them. We got *If You Leave Me* out of that. Another song we did then, one of mine, is going to be in that movie *Starstruck*.

We had lots of time to listen to things as we went along. We demo-ed a whole lot of stuff everytime we went in just to see what worked. And we'd take a tape deck out on the road and rehearsed till we got them right. Russell being a drummer is really a stickler (groan) for things sitting (double groan) right in a song. If they don't he won't even bother continuing with a song. He'll just tell you to piss off.

It's the first album the band's done that we can bear listening to!

Everybody's written something on the album. Even Wayne (Delisle). He's co-written the rockabilly number *Looking for Bed* which is an ode to three quarters of a ton of rushing steel and pink paint known as the 1974 Valiant Hemi-Pacer that we've come to know and love. Which I'd like to get when I'm wealthy. With a Hawaiian chauffeur because I don't drive.

Martin and Reg wrote about 4 (songs) each. Martin's singing one of Reg's songs on this one and one of Peter's songs which is one of my favourites, *Berserk Warriors*, which is about a Viking romance. Two Vikings who are lovers fall out so what happens is that they meet on the battlefield not as lovers and they're called Bjorn and Anna (Laughs). He took me aside one day and said really excited "It's really an allegory about the break up of Bjorn and Anna in Abba." He was thrilled. That's about as close as he comes to being deep.

We've got Peter marching on gravel for the rhythm track. Bruce told Peter "OK. You're in form now. Bang into class with your bag full of gravel and a shoe box." And so he did. He stole some gravel from a pet shop — special white goldfish gravel. And it sounds good — really interesting sound. We used a few tricks. That one's also got lots of nice operatic singing that we all had a go at. It's really good, especially if you're pissed."

In best Wagnerian fashion Greedy gives a demonstration.

"Then there's a song by Martin that's the slow wimpy ballad. Something he read in the paper earlier this year. It's a true story about this woman called Kathleen Ottom in Alicante in Spain. She hadn't been able to speak for seven years. She's lying in bed one day and the Madonna above her bed fell down and hit her on the head and when she woke up she could speak. And now she's singing in the church choir. The catholic in Martin really made him weep. He got quite carried away with it.

Reg has got a couple of really peculiar songs lyric-wise. One of them is *Psychedelic Peace Lamp*. The story behind that is Pete bought Reg a Psychedelic Peace Lamp for Christmas — it's a round plastic dish with an Aquarius sign made out of tin and bits of colour cellophane in there. Anyway Reg's playing with it all of Christmas Day and the bulb blew out. He tried for weeks and weeks to get another bulb before he found out you had to get one from Taiwan. But still it's the thought that counts. It's a quasi religious ode to a shiny piece of useless junk.

I've got the sad poetry song on there which is ... well what I'm telling people is that ... it's a put-down of Shakespeare. William Shakespeare the famous Bard of Avon not William Shakespeare the pop singer with the nice shoes. Anyway the song's just basically criticising the inclusion of Shakespeare in the English curriculum of Australian High Schools. It's very deeply disguised.

There's Martin's song *Let's Cook*, not Les Cook the famous T.V. producer who is now running an ice skating rink in Perth. He really is. That just says "Let's cook, let's work, let's eat." That's the only words in it. It's pretty minimalist (laughs)."

Greedy considers the songs on the album to be more self contained than perhaps past Mentals efforts. "The bits of our songs that are accessible have been highlighted a little bit. But a lot of it still doesn't make much sense. Like Reg said the other day — we're trying to polish up our act but we're trying to hang onto a bit of good old fashioned Australian apathy."

Greedy, the man who refuses to spend more than $500 on a keyboard, actually used a Fairlight CMI on a few songs — "it's a keyboard with a computer and floppy disc with samples of sound on it. Oh, and a calculator so you can work out how much you're getting paid for a gig while you're actually playing it! You can write songs on it too and it's made in Australia. Sounds like every band should have one!

There's no problem duplicating the sounds achieved (after the Koto, a Japanese string instrument) because Reg 'The Anorexic Chicken' Mombassa plays his guitar like that anyway." Greedy gives a passable imitation of Mombassa's strangled guitar sound.

The Mentals live show will be changed, or indeed has been changed, to include a couple of slower artsy-fartsy numbers which Greedy reckons will be a bit harder to play. This has come about from the observation that a few people have been coming along to actually listen to the band rather than just to get drunk. "Is that a bit of a shock?" I ask.

"Well it is a bit of a shock — particularly if you happen to be drunk yourself."

But Greedy does admit to a hint of creeping professionalism in the Mentals live performance. "I guess it's just being forced to work," he says. "And becoming good at something. But I have learnt nothing in the last 4 years (laughs). I think my songwriting is getting better but I still can't play any instruments."

Although he considers the band to have more roots than a geranium, it's a curious fact that most of them seem to be pretty ancient. "I think Marc Bolan is about as contemporary as we come. It must be something to do with not having a record player. I have been listening to the radio a lot — but it's been mainly the cricket commentary (laughs). It helps my MC technique."

Watches are looked at and it seems as though Andrew Sm has a plane to catch to Sydney. After the boisterous nature of the interview I decide on the spur of the moment to throw a curly parting shot.

"What's the greatest problem in the world today?" I ask.

Greedy ponders.

"Man's inhumanity to man," he finally states.

After a few seconds his face splits in a beaming smile.

"You didn't think I could answer that, did you?"

POLYMORPHOUS PRODUCTIONS
(08) 223 7780 - 223 7599
REPRESENTING
FOREIGN BODY
THE JUMPERS
SA REPRESENTATIVES FOR
REDGUM
THE DUGITES
THE BUSHWACKERS
THE BODGIES
new address: 1st floor, 240 Rundle St, Adelaide. PO Box 48, North Adelaide 5006

MATT FINISH

e and built to last

Moffitt and Rick Grossman by J

Matt Moffitt grins wryly when asked of street experiences as a teenager in New York.

"In New York there's streetlife – it gets really hot and everyone, whole families just sit out on their frontsteps – it's just blocks of big brown steps. In those days it was all juke box music. Lots of Motown and Puerto Rican music.

"I was living in 14th Street. That's the part of the world Jim Carroll was talking about (The Basketball Diaries 1963-1966). Actually, that part where he goes down to that porno joint and blows that guy or something – that's 14th Street.

"Streetlife – something that just doesn't happen here."

As a three-piece formed in late '79 with guitarist singer Matt Moffitt, bassist Jeff Clayton and drummer John Prior, Matt Finish played around Sydney's venues. "We were about the last band to really get anything out of the Civic. After that, after the new management, it was more like a picnic than a rock and roll gig."

A week short of a Queensland tour Jeff Clayton fell ill and Rick Grossman, well known through his work with Parachute, Bleeding Hearts and Eric Gradman's Man and Machine stepped in. "We pulled 1100 people one night in Brisbane, the night Rick joined the band," remembers Matt, "just through word of mouth and that's the best. That's not to say we've got anything against the press – that's gotten a bit out of proportion."

Rick: "It was quite funny actually. I went around to visit a friend of mine in Melbourne once. I had enough clothes to last me three days and these people asked me if I wanted to join a band. The similarity between Matt and I is that we always believe in doing things on the spur of the moment. I just thought 'well great, I'll do it.' That was a great experience for me – just throwing yourself into doing something."

Mark: "It came out a bit fast because Rick had been right in the middle of the Melbourne scene for quite a while when he came to Sydney. You know you have that Sydney/Melbourne difference that's always been there in lots of ways – and Adelaide too. Very different cities, very different sorts of priorities. I think the main strength of the band was or is that we aren't isolated to any one city. Jeff had been touring New Zealand for seven years, lived on the road or just in hotels. Rick has been doing basically the same things in Melbourne but had been to Adelaide and I had only basically lived in Sydney. I can remember the first time I went to Melbourne and met Gradman, Ross Wilson and Martin Armiger. All those people came along to us and played with us. It was great for me. I didn't know Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide – any of it. I was an outsider to the scene. I fell new to it. And the best thing about Melbourne to me has been most of the players in Melbourne seem to think that we sound more like a Melbourne band than a Sydney band. Also it was a bit of a new thing for Sydney too because it's more like a Melbourne atmosphere. People aren't really used to it. We had to sort of break a lot of ground ourselves. It's more intimate and that's probably what it should be."

Matt Finish became a four piece band in May 1980 with the return of Jeff Clayton as a guitarist. The band had auditioned no less than 50 people before welcoming Clayton back. He was still learning the instrument at that stage and his simple technique suited the band's uncluttered style. Short Note, recorded at Sydney's Paradise Studios, launched producer Peter Dawkins' Guest Recording Company with its release in March. Critically it's acclaimed as one of the best local debut albums of 1981. By now Matt Finish's live EP Fade Away should be making its presence felt.

Isolated or not, Adelaide audiences have an impress us or piss off attitude to interstate bands. Matt Finish played four gigs here late August and for their first time round all was fine, thank you very much.

Curious Thursday nighters at the Tiv agreed the band were much better live. Friday a crowd at the Shandon Stagedoor passed the word and Saturday night at the same venue was right up. Sunday at the Arkaba (well the roof was leaking) was hampered by foggy sound but never failed to impress.

This article is an account of a conversation with Moffitt and Grossman, self-censored by a temperamental tape recorder and totally uninspired by the red plushness of the deserted grill bar we found ourselves in on a very, very dismal Sunday evening. If Moffitt felt like he was about to perform that night in a left over Battle Star Galactica set, then the interview took place in the restaurant at the end of the universe.

MM: We didn't have much choice about when we came down to Adelaide ... we had to fight really hard to try and get down here. We've been trying for six months. You'd ring a promoter and they'd say 'I don't think anyone's going to be interested'. I think if anything we've proved them wrong.

Matt Finish aren't out to prove people wrong but they have broken some of the rules. They aren't of course the first band to do so and it will be interesting to see if the pressure changes their present structure.

MM: We've been trying to take it away from that real sort of hierarchy thing of management, band, then crew and seeing what people can do. It comes out and makes good reading to call it a stance. It makes a good article to put it in those terms. We've done ourselves out of a lot of obvious publicity by not doing it the standard way but when we started to get crowds we didn't want to change it. We did have a manager who was a good manager but it was not the sort of relationship we needed. Maybe because we felt that the average management relationship is a bit condescending. If you've got any pride or direction at all then ultimately you just can't get up there and sing or write songs about having a lot of freedom. You've got to make it work. It's pretty hard, but it's a lot of enjoyment really – being responsible for our own actions. And it backfires sometimes.

There's no one you can turn around and blame. You can't say fix it up in the mix or it's OK because you've got a huge conglomeration around you – that would take a lot of the joy away from it. It's just seven or eight people who have worked in this business a long time and have had the obvious problems of being ripped off or treated like shit because they're crew. It took six months to get used to the fact that we were only responsible for ourselves. There were a few changes of personnel not in the band so much as in the crew.

At times the parallel between right wing politics and bands is so close. You've got your boss up there and he'll look after you, make all your phone calls and protect you. I think it's a bit insidious. I think we are a bit perverse. We wanted to go out there and see what we could earn for ourselves.

RG: It really shows in the way an audience reacts to a band. In Sydney and Melbourne now people come along to us because they really like us, not because they've seen a huge billboard or something.

MM: We've been a bit reticent about becoming too monolithic. The temptation is there. On a bad night you think 'Oh God, all you've got to do is go up to Sydney's management agency and do it that way.'

RR: You said on 5MMM that the music industry is more conservative than the government.

MM: There's more money in it, not in the music itself though. It takes a lot to keep a band afloat. It takes a lot to keep people interested. A lot of people said we wouldn't last because we weren't promoting our nerves. It went as far as going into the record company and saying we don't want the album dumped on record stores so we get pushed into the charts. So the record stores were only ordering live copies when I came out and seeing that in one day and finding out that way that there was a demand for it. It just went straight through without any [illegible] it went gold on its own effort. It took a while.

RR: How did CBS react?

MM: Pretty badly. But that was only the hierarchy. The people who are actually working in there are like people anywhere you meet who are working. They are working because they want to be close to music. They want to do a job and they probably don't play. Most people we deal with are quite straightforward people. It's just the hierarchy. There's been no money spent on this band by anybody – so little, so little – when you consider that they spent $50 000 on a court case about Pop Mechanix name. We don't even have a 50th of that (laughs).

Like the first song on the EP is a track called Introduction which we have been doing for a long time. It starts out like a lot of our songs just over one little sentiment. Someone told me once that we had a Liberal Government for 23 years and it didn't change but when I did I was only very briefly – oh 23 years to work it out we'll have a right wing day. There is a bit of politics in our music. It's not the sort of politics as in governmental politics but in personal politics.

Matt Finish's personal politics of picking people for their taste rather than telling them what to do is reflected in the use of their front of house man Colin Lee Hoey as Fade Away's producer. Colin has worked in South East Asia and here with Midnight Oil and Rose Tattoo.

MM: But it makes us a bit edgy. It's a bit nerve wracking because it's the first time for everybody doing these things.

Lobby Lloyd gave Col a lot of the confidence. Lobby was going to do it with us, but at the last minute he said it was Col's thing and if he's going to freak, he's going to freak by himself.

I think the best thing about Lobby is that he is a really warm guy with a lot of experience and not much of a chip on his shoulder. He's a pretty clear thinker. He's very warm. You can see that in the Sunnyboys. You can see that they've got someone there who isn't a manager, who isn't a paternal sort of pushy character but who genuinely likes them and who is genuinely interested in their welfare. It shows I think.

Matt Finish feel they aren't much of a studio band and apparently Short Note was done pretty much in one take.

MM: We were a bit nervous when we first started recording and realised the only way to do it without driving ourselves nuts would be to just do it once, then keep it and live with it. The album was like that, the EP is much more like that. If you can't do it in one take you're not going to be able to do it in twenty.

RG: That song *Fade Away* we wouldn't even attempt to record it in the studio.

MM: It just wouldn't work. The songs need people atmosphere to sound any good. That's not to put down the album – they were more written songs. I thought the sound on the album was perhaps a bit thin. It's true of a lot of Australian records. The band go in and make an album and you think Christ that doesn't sound good. And then people start thinking that the band are playing it safe, but they're not at all. They went in, played their arse off and as soon as it gets on plastic, it sounds like it's on plastic.

The EP is pulled down more towards the live sound. There's mistakes in it and stuff like that. But it's great – very warm. I don't really like recording in an empty room. Nobody there. I mean it's a giving thing. It's supposed to be a giving thing. That bit of projection you put out when you are singing to somebody rather than just yourself I think is the way to make good records.

The EP *Fade Away* was recorded over two nights in the dingy FACT theatre where the band rehearses in Sydney. Five tracks were selected from sixteen recorded. No publicity was given; there was no stage – just a really relaxed atmosphere, a whole lot of people and 50 000 cans.

RG: It was great ... getting half way through a song and going NO! People were rather taken aback.

MM: We were stopping songs in the middle. At one stage some guy fell straight over my monitors face down on the floor. So we had to stop that take.

On My Way is a song we really like. It's one we hope will get a bit of airplay but I don't know. It was really influenced by Lene Lovich actually, just a touch of her earlier stuff before she got really big. *Eat Your Lips Off* is a song about amphetamines – you know that really wonderful feeling when you feel like someone's sump (slinks down chair and assumes appropriate gummy mouthed contortions). Cafe is the only track we did a little bit of doctoring on in the studio. I put another vocal down. It's very quirky and a bit strange, a bit haunting. I think it shows more than all the others where we are going now.

RG: We did an interview in Sydney a while ago and people ask you about songs. I have this theory that all the great songs you know – all the classics like *Hey Jude* or whatever were written in ten minutes. There's nothing behind them at all. The song Cats we played once, just once at rehearsal and then we were playing it that night and we put it on.

MM: This only really coherent thing you can say is that it's pretty much the story of a band going in a studio and trying [illegible] conceive it and realising that it's not really the answer and then going back to some sort of immediate approach – which is not really new. It's been done before, plenty of times. It works differently with different bands.

Although Matt Finish have never played a cover version they are inevitably compared with other bands.

MM: The best reactions that I think I've heard to us aren't what I think of the band at all. Its like Camilleri saying we sound like Jimmy Reed, that we are up there playing bayou music. We get told we sound like everybody from Midnight Oil to Credence Clearwater.

The business necessity and the fashion now dictates that you are fairly consistent in your approach. That you have a sound, you dwell on that sound and make it easy – easily all gestalt. The big challenge for us and where we are a bit perverse is trying to stay a step ahead of it and making it a bit hard for people maybe. It's to pick their curiosity a bit.

MM: We don't want to be pigeon holed as a non-compromising band. That's as much bullshit as being one. We want a bit of freedom. Claustrophobia is a bit of a rampant thing with all of us. I'd feel rather similar raised to go to a place with a whole lot of noise and a whole lot of promotion for the first time. Ultimately it's better that people don't expect much and they get a lot more than they expect. The first time in Brisbane was really really difficult. It was suicidal. No one was interested much. But we've done it now with two year's of working just playing our own stuff.

You get bias straight away against you if you can sing. They prefer you to be more of a stylist. I think style is great but it's something born through time. You can't pick it up or buy some.

The whole fundamentals have changed. Take a band like Daddy Cool. They got a chance to tour, make friendships with the people they worked with. And they got the chance to go through a lot of stress and stress is growth. You can lend a little of that off and there are times when I really honestly I wish I had. It's very difficult to go out and play really late and then the phone starts ringing at nine because you've got to work out where the truck is [illegible] stuff. But we're responsible [illegible] we are very proud of [illegible] people it's a bit self[illegible]

It's been a pretty [illegible] for us. You draw a lot [illegible] something on television [illegible] think you are absolutely [illegible] amounts in insulting [illegible] thing you are lucky [illegible] much to do with that [illegible] the vital part [illegible] – we've tried twice [illegible] away. Peter Dawkins [illegible] the theatre do take try [illegible] They said it's good [illegible] We said we didn't [illegible] course you don't you're a bit neurotic.

The best thing is by the time we go on TV we will have done our work, paid our dues a bit. We want to do it that way and I believe we have to. If you get it the easy way it's going to go really easy, but if you work for it, it will last. I want to be playing for the next thirty years – that's all I want to do. So it's very necessary for your integrity not to do it the easy way – you just do it quietly.

TV is an easy way and a damn good way to impress. And one day I'd like to do that too – but I don't think Australians react well to that superficiality. Some of us don't see ourselves as multi media stars either. So in time I think we can tackle it better. I spent three years studying theatre at the Ensemble but I ended up finishing that up too because it seemed to be leading the idea just a touch.

I like the mystery around the band too. Not too many people know too much about us. It's not a deliberate thing. It's just the way it's worked.

We are an Australian band ... and I love this country. I watch things like that programme on Ned Kelly and it makes me get really – I must be my Irish blood or something.

RR: You sound as if you prescribe sincerely to the lucky country ideology.

MM: My father spent half his life writing about it and wreaking himself to death over it. I've just [illegible] that's all. It's true though, isn't it? We go on a lot about it between ourselves but never go out and sell it. No one here has got much money and the lucky mess. If that's what it is, the climate and it's so beautiful, lounging around we get to see a lot of it.

I can't really see how you can like a band when your ten year old sister's got their poster on the wall. It belongs to different sorts of age groups and lifestyles. I have my own feelings about where ours lies, but I'm continually surprised. One thing that's important too is the sort of crowd you find yourself in when you go along to watch a band. I spent a lot of time watching bands. I can't stand watching shows. I hate shows. I like a bit of edge, a bit of aggression and energy. I really like Brian McIlwaine, people like that. I sit down and play with it – percussive, aggressive, acoustic music. Not folk music. Anything from Piazz #6 on up. Just really rhythmic music.

We've been told that we were victimised right from the start by the more established music business, but at the moment the following we are enjoying is just great. And it's not 12 year old kids. It's a lot of players – people like us. When I say us, it's in general terms. It's people who like all sorts of different music, who aren't so fascist, who don't dress up in all the latest.

I watched this thing on TV today about Ned Kelly and the incredible bloody persecution of his whole family – the way they threw his mother in gaol! And you just pick up on this bloody rage that someone like that would feel after a while. Isn't really following English fashion and music and clothes just the same colonialism that we have been trying to get rid of?

Talk to anyone like Armiger whose been across there and they'll say it's fucked. You can't wait to get back here – like the Oils. We were [illegible] who was saying that they were going to do Reading but they wanted to come back – we flew out the Marquee then we came back.

But the thing about a show though is that I could eclipse the importance of all the band – it's just the music and what people get out of it. I think we would have lost the ground to differing interpretations if we had gone out [illegible] and little logo – everything to push someone into thinking the way you think of it.

Bands like Spandau Ballet, Visage – they have no relevance to Australia. Their country is over 2000 years old, the cities are overcrowded. It's shitty weather. Nobody's got any money. Dressing up is probably a good way to forget that you've got no bread and butter. It's got nothing to do with Australia and anyone who walks around in it, they're just a fucking idiot really. We've got our own bands, a different climate, different people. A bit destructive, a bit malevolent. Don't like too much over the [illegible] and that's a source of strength.

RR: But you have plans to go to the UK next year.

MM: Yeah, even if I have to go and busk. I'll go over there. I just went to have a look. It's hard to say yet whether we'll be going over there as a band. But I'd really like to do some recording. We are talking to some producers over there at the moment.

RR: Glynn Johns?

MM: Could be.

RR: Pete Townsend?

RG: Yeah ... well that's quite a good possibility. Like I don't know Pete Townsend, we've just had correspondence. But he seems to be the Lobby Lloyd of England – if you know what I mean. He does amazing things. He cares, really cares about young bands while a lot of those older people have resentment for younger groups coming up now. He's started his own PA hire company with really good equipment; he hires cheaply to young bands.

Talk turns to bigotry ... musical bigotry.

MM: Some of the bands that Rick and I have been in have had religious followings. They didn't want to know about anything else. That was boring for me and boring for Rick. That sort of approach to your band is really terrible.

RG: "The worst example of that would have been Radio Birdman's following. They like Birdman, MC5. They like anything Tek likes and that's it. I don't worry about that anymore. I saw Rob Younger the other day and he was saying he likes Short Note. He's not like that – not like those people on the North Shore or whatever or like some people in the inner city ... the people who live in the suburbs are real people."

MM: Not career conscious anarchists – they're thinking at 35 right now ... upwardly mobile anarchists.

RG: Like I can't say what sort of music I like because I like everything from the Four Tops to Birdman to Joni Mitchell to Miles Davis, anything, Brian Eno ... Wagner. I love Wagner.

MM: Anything with quality and feel to it.

RG: But these people! Like I had a very close friend who works at an import shop and he's like that ... likes one sort of music and everything else is shit. I can't see how people can think like that. It's just so frustrating.

MM: It's identity. Whatever their inadequacy they are going to cope with it by saying they are that sort of person, which is a very bad way to start. They wind up digging a hole for themselves and working up to ground level rather than starting at ground level and going up from there in their own estimation. Our priorities lie in playing our own stuff then later. I think if you do go for any media exposure, do it once there is an interest there. Create your own interest rather than create interest with promotion. When I get someone who comes up to me and says they haven't seen me on Countdown – I mean I just don't want to know about that thing. I don't draw my identity by what I don't do, but what we do do. I think that the only prerequisite to work with somebody is that they care as much about what they are doing as you care about what you are doing.

RG: Yeah, peer group pressure. This guy from the import shop has just married a girl who's got the same musical tastes as him. I've known him for ten years now and I took a Radio Birdman album (Living Eyes) back to the shop because I didn't like it. I swapped it for a Dire Straits record and he didn't talk to me for two weeks. Is that the basis of a friendship?

MM: Just sheep motherfuckers. The Cris said something once that's just very, very right – it's just too hot to wear the fashion over here. It's just too bloody hot.

RR: A bit like the roast turkey on Christmas day when it's 36° – that bizarre misplacement that seems to be here.

MM: Absolutely ... all the kids hoping for snowflakes on the window pane. I guess we are finding our identity. It's our generation who are making it. I don't think music is important in any other way other than if it has energy. If it has energy and makes you – not want to drive yourself home and wrap yourself around a telegraph pole ... but if it puts a bit of doubt in you or if the person you are watching gives you the shits a bit but you're watching ... it's a feeling. It's better than stacking the deck.

Matt Moffitt pic Eric Algra

'EITHER YOU MAKE THE MUSIC OR YOU LISTEN TO IT'

Donald Robertson talks with producer Bob Clearmountain, who has worked with The Stones, Bruce Springsteen and has just finished producing the second Church album.

It's not often one gets the chance to talk to the people behind the recording studio door. Good producers are always in big demand and the high pressure and technical nature of their work usually demands all of their energy and concentration.

But with overseas producers becoming more common figures in the Australian recording scene I guess it was only a matter of time before the media were invited to talk to one of these giant gods.

Bob Clearmountain has just finished recording the second Church album at Studio 301 in Sydney. He mixed their first album *Of Skins And Heart* at his home base at Power Station Studios in New York. Clearmountain's personal taste in music is melodic rock, a description that is certainly not out of place with regards to the Church. I love them, Clearmountain says. I think they're terrific.

He is also full of praise for Studio 301 saying that it's better than all but ten of New York's major studios. Australian bands get the thumbs up too. There seem to be more good bands here than there are in New York, and he describes Sydney as a real warm city. Does it sound like he's wangling for another trip out here or what?

Clearmountain was a member of a Connecticut bar band, one member of which knew the head of Media Sound, one of the major New York studios. After the band broke up Clearmountain started hanging around the studio, got hired as a delivery boy and gradually worked his way up the ladder to the producer's chair. The whole process took 6 months. The first record he actually produced was Kool and the Gang's *Hollywood Swing*, a big U.S. chart single. Since that time he's worked with the Boomtown Rats, Jim Carroll, David Werner, Bruce Springsteen, The Rolling Stones and other names ad infinitum. His special forte up to date seems to have been remixing album tracks into singles, something he did for the 12" version of the Stones' *Miss You*, the Springsteen cut *Hungry Heart* and the last Boomtown Rats single.

A typical Clearmountain day in New York would run roughly thus: Up around noon, cycle to work about 7 p.m. and work through till 4 or 5 a.m. Seven days a week usually. You either work a lot he says. Or not at all. These off periods are necessary to retain some perspective both on life itself and more importantly the current state of music. When you've spent ten hours surrounded by music you can't really hear it any more. I usually just sit in front of the TV and space out.

Heroes among producers? Clearmountain cites Nick Lowe, Roger Bechirian (who has done the last couple of Costello albums) and Robert John Lange, best known for his work with the Boomtown Rats. Interesting that they should all be English as with the Church Clearmountain has gone for a basically English sound, crisp drums and accentuated vocals, with an overall American polish. A clean and palatable transatlantic pop sound that should serve the Church well outside this country. Because even if some people say the days of the great producers are gone a producer's name can still mean the difference between something being listened to or thrown in the bin.

You just can't get the sort of experience that people like Clearmountain and his ilk pick up in an average day. The interaction between that experience and Australian talent has already proven successful (David Tickle – Split Enz, Pete Solley – Sports, Joe Jo Zep, Nick Launay – The Birthday Party, and from what I've heard of the Glyn Johns – Midnight Oil collaboration I reckon there'll soon be another one to add to the list).

As Clearmountain says there's no barrier in the U.S.A. for Australian bands – America will accept anything on its merits. Of course American radio will only accept something it understands but the kids don't care where you're from (as long as it's not Russia or Iran – Frederick Smith). And if you've got an expertly tailored cut to your sound – well it isn't going to hurt your chances, is it?

What's that about Steve Lillywhite doing the new Icehouse album?

JOYOUS INVASION

I've been hesitating starting this article due to an unnatural fear of using the name Adelaide near the beginning (damn, I've done it now...). Adelaide has gone through a long lull as far as commercial and to an extent critical success goes (I mean like when did you last see an Adelaide band on Countdown, hmmm? Not that that matters anyway). On top of that a lot of local critics are painfully aware of this current status and thus feel obliged to write things like as good as anything else elsewhere in Australia which adds to the Insignificant paranoia syndrome rather than detracting from it. There are a lot of reasons for this lack of Adelaide presence — few venues, small crowds and not much money — all of which lead to bands breaking up before time, before they have achieved anything substantial enough to make an impact on a larger scale. Adelaide is to Australia as Australia is to the world. Some bands get themselves together enough to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Only a few have been successful (the Angels, Cold Chisel, Redgum), most others have not (Young Modern, Terminal Twist etc.)

Recently a few bands have begun to break down these oft self-inflicted barriers. The Dagoes for instance are beginning to make waves (leap to mixed reviews (which they thrive on anyway), as have the Rodgies, No Fixed Address, the Young Homebuyers (God knows why) and Nuvo Bloc. Now perhaps another name may be added to this list: that of Joyous Invasion.

The most sought after gigs in Adelaide are supports to interstate bands — (an indication of the state Adelaide is in at the moment) because they are usually guaranteed of good crowds and okay money. Few bands — none that I can think of actually — get the added bonus of impressing the main act enough to get them to watch their set, which is an ego boost in a town where despondency for bands is easily come by. But with the Joyboys this has been the case with such luminaries as the Birthday Party who not only watched the set but offered a good chunk of praise, encouragement and advice. A more recent, and perhaps the most important, support was one to the Serious Young Insects a few weeks ago.

Reports have it that the Insects were struck to such an extent that they gave the Joyboys the if you come over to Melbourne we'll make it worth your while as well as taking a copy of the band's last demo, about 5 or 6 months old. Whether these rumours are true or not Joyous Invasion are near definitely moving to the more alluring prospects of Melbourne in December, with a possible 4 or 5 track EP released around the same time.

Watching the Joyous Invasion mature from their first gig some 9 or so months ago as a good but overly delicate pop band to the rich, often sombre group they are now, it is easy to believe that they'll be successful in no small way. Though unpretentious to the extreme (with the result that on stage they sometimes tend to look too static and withdrawn where maybe some pretensions and thereby theatricality could help) unlike many Adelaide bands in existence for the same amount of time they are continually reinforced by their experiences and if anything their enthusiasm is growing rather than diminishing.

The stir their name with its similarity to Joy Division caused came as an honest surprise to them. Taken from a novel by Theodore Sturgeon, the name was meant as a joyous invasion through music into peoples' minds (I hope I've phrased that right) as well as the implied connotations of new hope and the innocent thrill of sexual discovery.

On stage, despite the aforementioned withdrawn stance, they can be a joy to watch. John Statham's guitar playing is the most progressive I've seen. Not only are his musical ideas innovative, rarely playing chords, but relying on complex riffs, sustained notes, feedback and bent and straight harmonics — but his approach to the actual playing just flirts with magnification. Stephen Huxford doubles as sentinel guitar player adding sharp chorused chords, sometimes jazz, sometimes atonal in construction, as well as sharing synth work with singer Ken Gelder. In this areas as well are their ideas fresh, for they veer radically away from the Gary Numan/Human League style and instead create sounds that give the impression of melody and which fill out an otherwise sparse sound. Add to that the solid quirky rhythm section of Brett Atkins (bass) and Colin Jeddons (drums) and Ken's Julian Cope-like voice and the overall impression is the ambiguous one of familiarity through accessibility and unfamiliarity due to innovation.

For a short while their ideas reached a stagnant point which led to songs reiterating the same ideas or being too long in length. However their more recent songs, especially *Patrice's Peg Dolls*, *Circus Lumiere* and *City of Women*, show an awareness of these faults since they are shorter, more precise and inventive in terms of composition. Joyous Invasion are not everybody's cup of tea (play faster ya wimps and can ya do *Stayin' Alive* — excuse the plagiarism) but they have gained the unique position of being respected and admired by bands and audiences from both Adelaide's alternate and commercial camps. If everyone is going to get into wondering who will be Adelaide's next big thing then I'm placing my bets on Joyous Invasion because if you can think outside of terms like 100 000 record sales and slick guitar solos then this band is one of the finer things in musical life that make it all worthwhile.

EARL GREY

HAVE YOU MET ARTHUR DENT...

Refer to

THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY. AVAILABLE NOW

ORIGINAL RECORDS POWDERWORKS THRU RCA

ALL CATS ARE GREY

an interview with Laurence Tolhurst of The Cure by Mark Mordue

Back in our desperation
Hopes drip beyond our dreams
Uncertain lanes
Over prettiness
Thinking of the way I [illegible]
Drawn [illegible] by the picture
Rich in colour
Pain in shape
Our first [illegible] by dancing
At a [illegible] that we [illegible]

The Cure combine elements of abstraction and impressionism: they explore and hint at rather than clearly state their motives and interests. At best their music becomes an evocation of doubt, at worst an indulgence in negativity. But the line between the two is so fine and the areas they explore so personal that such an evaluation becomes inevitably subjective. Which is exactly what The Cure are about: they make personal journeys into common and shared experiences that you can identify with or deny. The real question is whether or not those journeys are worthwhile in terms of the ways in which they're related.

My first reference point for the interview was a review of *Faith*, The Cure's last album, in New Musical Express, famous for its sarcasm, xenophobic love of obscure bands' debut albums and all things intense and small. Ray Lowry panned *Faith*, stating that it was "very well played, beautifully recorded and (said) absolutely nothing at all in a fairly depressing way".

Laurence Tolhurst, the drummer for The Cure, remembers the review and quite obviously didn't like it. "The thing you have to realize about Ray Lowry is that he only likes music before 1970. He's the cartoonist for N.M.E. and they gave him our album to review because it was obvious he would do something with it. He's just a cynical old fool." Lowry saw *Faith* as a failure since it didn't transcend its feelings of pain, misery and the hurt of rejection. It didn't tell the listener anything. Tolhurst found that conclusion difficult to understand. "Good and bad are such subjective things anyway. For us *Faith* was an exorcism for those feelings."

It's that exorcism which needs to be recognized to understand the album and The Cure. For although they can't provide the intensity of a band like Joy Division, whose visions ended in the suicide of Ian Curtis, they can pose similar questions. These can be u[illegible] hing out the conc[illegible] [illegible] more [illegible] Curtis' work [illegible] while The Cure [illegible] survive their work [illegible]. Slightly [illegible] perhaps [illegible] and survive than to regard it with sheer terror and confusion and not be consumed by it instead.

Ironically enough *Doubt*, the only track on *Faith* the band weren't completely happy with. For my part I found the album stylistically a little too close to *Seventeen Seconds* for comfort, almost worryingly so in terms of the ability of The Cure to progress beyond refining a sound they'd used to distinguish themselves.

"Sure *Seventeen Seconds* was a complete package in a style we'd evolved into. But on *Faith*, although the style is similar, for instance things like the hypnotic guitar, we tried to use the opportunity to experiment with that style. As it is we feel we've gone as far as we want with that sound and we'll be moving on to something different. We've just recorded a single which should be out in September or so where we went into the studio purely to experiment with something new. The song grew from an improvisation really. When you hear it I'm sure you'll feel it's different from things we've done before.

"Getting back to *Faith* though, I think it can be seen that very definite lines are explored. We came around to thinking why everybody exists and what they believe in. So on the album you have songs connected with such things as growing older and especially organized religion. On *All Cats Are Grey*, for instance, we examined the belief in only what you see around you and what you feel."

Does that reflect your own attitude to life?

"Well to a certain extent. In that the process I was talking about in *All Cats Are Grey* is one that is filtered through our own personal bias. Which, when you consider the tone of the album and what you mentioned earlier about our interest in the more disturbing side of life, isn't to say we are always miserable. It's just that we find these things far more interesting to write about. When you enjoy yourself you tend to leap into life more. It's so much harder to write a happy song without it sounding cliched or trivial. Probably, I suppose, because when you are happy you tend to enjoy yourself whereas unhappiness tends to make you more introspective."

The problem seems to be that when you begin to provide those introspections through any medium, how interesting individuals are, the personal experiences of the artist before they cross the line [illegible] was interested particularly with the recent rioting in Britain and the depressed economic situation. Do The Cure feel their music should be more political in order to relate to the frustrations of youth in England?

"That's a very difficult to answer really. Up until now music has never been particularly affiliated to any particular youth movement. We're concerned of course, and we may write a song dealing more directly with those issues yet, I don't know. At the moment we're more interested in expressing our own feelings. In that sense I think we're personally political. You see politics purports to be about people but quite often it's not about people at all. It often deals with organizations in fact.

"We don't make any great claims about what we're saying or doing anyway. If people are interested that's fine. It would be a misinterpretation of our reasons to make the assumption that we are specifically trying to make profound statements about the world."

Well then, what sort of music do you like and what has influenced you from that world?

"I quite like Public Image and Joy Division. Siouxsie and the Banshees are a band we're very similar to in spirit I think. We all read quite a lot as well. The influences we have are very diverse. On *Faith* you can detect how Robert was influenced by a record of Gregorian Chanting that he bought. Also all of us had older brothers who introduced us to a lot of music, people like Hendrix and Beefheart. Everything we do, see and hear really."

Is there anything you particularly dislike happening in music?

"Usually I can see the merits in just about everything. I try and keep a fairly open mind. One thing which I do dislike is the New Romantics. It's really just fashion for the sake of fashion. Style without content."

What about issues like avoiding exploitation and "selling out"? Bands like Public Image, whom you mentioned earlier, have expressed very strong views. When you came here last it was a fairly low key tour of the pubs and clubs. This time it's a concert tour and you're promoting a new album and single. [illegible] indicative of a change in attitude [illegible] between [illegible] and the audience and by [illegible] commercial success do you think you're selling out, or you could be?

"Well we're not doing this to promote the album [illegible] most of the people who have bought tickets to our shows would have already bought *Faith* before. We enjoy playing live and it's only fair to an audience that hasn't had the opportunity to see much of us.

"As for the concert environment, it has its disadvantages sure. Our main reason for wanting larger venues was the film. Clubs are fine when only the required number of tickets are sold, but the trouble is that it's so common happening. When you get people packed together and up to their necks in sweat, urine, beer and vomit it hardly creates a good atmosphere.

"It's not a star thing at all. You mentioned you were only given very short notice for the interview and I genuinely feel sorry about that. As you get bigger you naturally get more people who think they represent you and quite often their decisions and actions aren't representative of you at all. We like to have contact with our audience and talk with them after a show. We don't like to see anybody who's interested in our music get the rough end of any treatment if we can help it. That's why we opted for a concert situation this time around as well rather than a tour of the clubs. We saw our audience being treated poorly in the latter situation so we felt concerts would be a better way of coping with the numbers of people who wanted to see us in reasonable conditions. That doesn't mean our accessibility is lost however as we do try very hard to be open to as many people as possible.

"The whole thing about it is that we're not in love with the romantic view of the poor starving artist. It doesn't push the creative barrier up for anyone by being that way. At the same time we're not pushing to be commercially successful but if more people are interested that's fine. You see nobody ever likes the mainstream but the mainstream can always change. The idea that by keeping it small it will always be beautiful is just no good. In my opinion it's a pretty pseudo-intellectual view and it achieves nothing."

How about creative changes? Do you think *Faith* is a better album than *Boys Don't Cry*, and if so why?

"*Boys Don't Cry* was representative of a two year period in our development. It's really a compilation of a lot of our early work. Songs like *10.15*, *Three Imaginary Boys* and *Accuracy* could and don't fit into our more recognised style established by *Seventeen Seconds*. We were much younger then than now obviously and our music is different because we're different. The frustrating thing is that some members of the audience don't respond to songs from *Faith* a[illegible] between our earlier work. [illegible] want you to change but when you do they often can't accept it. Live we play all of *Faith* and most of our earlier stuff but we try and incorporate it into what we're doing now."

What's the idea behind having a film instead of a support band?

"We've always tried to give support bands the best possible opportunity to present themselves. But on a large tour there are often problems that prevent that from happening, which worries us a lot. It's really such an old showbiz idea to have a warm-up too. And we don't like the idea of one band being presented as better than the other within that framework.

"The film *Carnage Visors* was made by Simon's brother-in-law and aside from the factors we mentioned against having a support band for the moment, the film provides people with another perspective on us. We've heard piles of Australian music and there are plenty of bands I'm sure we'd be interested in having play with us. Last time I was here I saw ME8245 in Melbourne and I thought they were quite good. I don't really like commenting on particular bands though as it's only a matter of my personal taste so why is mine any better than someone else's? The trouble is if you don't say anything people think you don't care; if you do say something it seems often to appear that you're being patronising."

Thanks for your time and the interview. Often I get the impression people in your situation don't want to give their time to and don't care about people who are interested but perhaps less important than some others they could be talking to.

"That's O.K. It's like I've been trying to say. We're not above anybody at all. I mean we're not all like The Police or someone you know. The whole point is that we're just like anybody else really."

JOHN DOE'S REALLY RUINED SCENE

Cancel my subscription to The Resurrection

Jim Morrison

I'd like to take out an ad in The Resurrection"

John Doe

Now let's see. Rockabilly's been and gone in England. It's going to be big here in a minute. Mods? Well, like N.M.E.'s Gasbag put it, would they all be setting fire to themselves if they'd seen Towering Inferno instead of Quadrophenia?

New Romantics are getting old age benefits in Britain so it should be cool in the discos here soon. Funk? O.K. set your alarms for January. Destroying the work ethic? Ah, that's a slippery one. If Viner, Fraser and Sinclair don't do it first, we could have that in two years. Adam's [illegible] has been and gone (forever).

Looks like we'll be able to find space for The Birthday Party about next March. The first or is it second wave was washed back, but be in Sydney when they catch up next autumn.

Mutant Disco might take a while. It might slip the net completely, lost in amongst all the funk. Rapping? Yes, three weeks. National Front? Too late, that was last week (Queensland). Industrial Rock. Hm, guess we can squeeze that in between surf music and the psychedelic revival in early December. Maybe keep the Industrialists in cold old Melbourne. Push surf music in Sydney and north from there.

We'll have to sell The Australian Invasion fairly carefully. How about October next year or are we having Heavy Metal over here then? That was in England last week. What's left? How about South American cool? Alright, the week after next.

Glenn Miller? (He's missing). Yeah, we'll do that this week. It won't last long but should move some units.

Ragtime? Dunno, it might have to wait a while. Tellyawhat, Organise a T.V. show. A [illegible] sell the theme on record.

Who've we got on the list for a comeback this month? J.P.Y.'s due. What'll we do with his hair this time? Better give the cricket theme a miss this year. What's Issy Die doing? Oh well, maybe next year. Shocking Blue must be ready and Mark Holden. Re-release a Skyhooks album. Not yet? O.K.

Shall we let Dave Warner get famous soon? He wants it so much. Do anything. Let's put him down for summer too. Pat Boone? Nah. Normie Rowe? Possible. What about a Beach Boys album? Are live albums ready for the treatment again?

And on ... And on ... And on.

Oh, did I mention The Cramps?

*

It's those journalists. It's those fucking journalists! said honest Lou just after saying Hi, Bruce and sending millions of Reed freaks scurrying for the record shops to stock up on Springsteen albums.

Honest journalism? Fuck that. Too much like hard work.

Everything you read in the books, leave it there! said honest John, although Mr Cale would have us believe everything we hear on his records.

The media as watchdog is absolute shit! said honest Paul so many years ago, and probably says so still. It's only absolute shit when people like Weller think that it's a watchdog at all. What kind of watchdog would he like then?

The only power the media has is when people go on blindly believing all that they read. Back to Mr Cale. Pure, unopinionated reportage can get boring, whereas opinion can be used by the reader as a point of reference for interpretation. Back to Mr Weller.

Let's see how long can I string this shit out for? And how many peanuts will pay that it's good? Who will I irritate? Shit, I don't care. I'll be dead soon.

I'm going to will my entire record collection (one copy of The Fugs' Golden Filth) to someone needy. Let's see, who could really use it? Angus Young? Nah, he would have heard it. The Models? No, they're old hippies, they'd have heard it too.

Come to think of it, all we've got is old hippies (and cabaret) — Cold Chisel, The Angels, Icehouse ... everybody (even Molly). Shit, someone better get in on it. Yeah! When's the hippie revival?

I know. The Dagoes have already started it.

Bury me under the clothes hoist.

*

I have definitely and positively seen and identified the net future of rock and roll. They're called Moving Pictures. Where else but on Countdown could you see a very corny, very weak Springsteen (woops) clone. Just think of all the times you haven't seen old Bruce himself on Countdown.

Whatever did happen to Molly's Media Mania anyway? I thought that for a moment I might get a bit of solid-gold platinum real live fame (overnight). But, alas.

I should get really nasty for a while just to show off, and I assure you there is nothing nastier than a vindictive old hippie!

Let's see, what have we got left? The companies stink. The venues stink. The media stinks. Most of the music stinks. The letters to the editor stink. The editor stinks. My room stinks. Surfies stink. Mods stink. Punks stink. Hippies stink. ... Springsteen stinks (some of his records aren't bad). Melbourne stinks. Sydney stinks. Adelaide stinks.

Quick! A sedative. Yuch! It stinks.

I think it's time for me to become extinct.

And as my warm red blood spurts lazily into the aromatic green bath water, it mixes to a kind of shit coloured brown. That's Entertainment (thanks Paul). Randy Newman's Sail Away plays quietly in the background. I've had a fairly safe run and hope my ghost gets up your nose and tears out your sinus. It's time to say goodbye and no correspondence will be entered into.

Cancel my subscription to The Resurrection.

John Doe (R.I.P.)

WHAT HAS TWO HEADS, THREE ARMS AND STEALS SPACE CRAFT?

THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY. AVAILABLE NOW

ORIGINAL RECORDS POWDERWORKS THRU RCA

SLOW CHILDREN

Slow Children are Pal Shazar and Andrew Chinich. Donald Robertson means the phone

They live in Boston. Pal tells me because it's got clean air and culture round every corner. They met in L.A. where Andrew was working on a movie and Pal was an artist. Andrew loves movies but hates L.A. He worked with hot shot Polish avante-gard director Zanussi on two films in Poland (circa 1975) and one in America.

Chinich tells me the cover of the duo's self titled debut album is based on the Jean Cocteau film *The Blood Of The Poet* and that the first film clip the pair did was in fact a mini-version of the film.

A quick glance at the lyrics on their album inner sleeve shows an obvious intelligence working from a definite philosophical base which one could strongly label Thirties Paris (Cocteau Sartre).

Musically the album has its moments, particularly on *President Am I* but lacks real cohesion. A mish-mash of modern sounds is employed to give the musical ideas a contemporary gloss but the ideas themselves are neither bold nor startling.

But apparently too bold and startling for the American music business. Slow Children were signed by Nigel Gray of Ensign Records (Boomtown Rats) in London after he heard some demos they had sent. He couldn't believe we didn't have a deal, explains Pal who is possessed of a wide American [illegible]. There's more possibility of being given a chance here (London). If you're not playing canned clap (in America) it's so hard to get people to listen.

The Slow Children album was produced by Jules Shear and Steven Haig, two members of Jules and the Polar Bears, a band I'm only vaguely familiar with. Shear and Haig were in the audience the first night Slow Children (there were four others in the band) performed. They only did one song but it was enough to start a partnership that endures to this day. In fact, the week before they were offered the deal with Ensign the band broke up, and Pal and Andrew have just finished a week's rehearsal with a band that includes Haig. They'll be doing more live work in London early this month.

Andrew is quite insistent that Slow Children is not just a stepping stone to more film work, although he says film encompasses the most amount of art in one medium. He is also of the opinion that there will never be a menage between rock n roll and movies. Videodiscs? Boring.

Andrew and Pal did their first clip (*Talk Aloud Voices*) themselves but Andrew comments that the clip that has started getting exposure here, *President Am I*, is a lot quicker and thus better for TV.

With the armoury of skills they have at their disposal it's quite possible that Slow Children could hitch a ride on the general thirties movement/style emanating from London at the moment. If they can find a more developed musical stance their next album *Spring to Seattle* could be very interesting indeed.

KID'S GOT STYLE

Sue Mathews finds out about the New York Dolls, dressing up with Malcolm McLaren, solo careers, politics & some other stuff as well from David Johansen.

Somehow it comes as a bit of a surprise to hear the funky-but-chic David Johansen say that he's been compiling information on South Africa.

"I become curious about different places around the globe in terms of lifestyle and things, and then I like to devour them," he says. It's not really what you expect first up from a founding member of the New York Dolls, the mid 70s band for whom you could be forgiven for thinking the word outrageous was invented, and who first established that glitter wasn't the sole property of the Rockette chorus girls of Radio City Music Hall.

But an interest in South Africa is one of the bases for Johansen's association with guitarist Blondie Chaplin. Chaplin, who played with the Beach Boys in their 'Holland' and 'Carl and the Passions' phase. He has since become a major part of David Johansen's entourage, playing lead guitar and having co-written most of the songs on Johansen's recently released album 'Here Comes the Night'.

According to Johansen, talking in his manager's office on New York's Fifth Avenue (in the same building as Rolling Stone magazine) overlooking Central Park, "Blondie was a veritable well of information about South Africa. I was writing the song 'Swahili Woman' at the time. It's a pretty weird place. I'd rather not talk about it. I think some places there are probably OK."

I wasn't quite sure what he meant — what the political content of Johansen's interest in South Africa was, so I asked him whether he was interested in playing there.

"No. I'd probably go to get it. If I played there I'd probably start shooting my mouth off as soon as I got off the plane. I've never really considered it as a market."

Phew. With the New Right so much in the ascendancy here, conservative politics are the fashionable kind and you can't make assumptions any longer about what attitude someone like Johansen would have to issues like South Africa.

Along with Sylvain Sylvain and Johnny Thunders Johansen helped form the New York Dolls in 1973. The Dolls are often cited as a predecessor to punk, in their stance as well as their sound. On the basis of this expressed concern about South Africa I wondered whether the band were conscious of the time of the more radical aspects of what they were doing.

"Sort of but not so much as perceived by the critics. I think audiences got an idea of hope, you know, that things don't have to be so corporate oriented. I think that we brought the music back to the people instead of it all being so gilded. We were closer to the audience, we spoke the same language. We were more accessible instead of being god-like stars doing you a favour by playing."

But doesn't the whole costumed theatrical approach the Dolls had to rock and roll serve to distance a band from its audience?

"Well actually when we started we were really like the people in the audience. That has a lot to do with how we evolved because we were playing music and writing songs for a certain group of people. There were a lot of people in New York who were brought together by the Dolls in one room — night people stuff like that. In those days there was not a lot happening for these people — we opened up a lot of places for rock music."

Johansen's second album was called '*In Style*' and '*Funky but Chic*' from his first solo album has become almost a signature tune. I asked him how important he thought fashion and dress were in rock and roll.

"I'm sometimes really into fashion and sometimes really anti fashion — I change, y'know. At one time in the Dolls we got around to wearing plastic garbage bags. We'd poke a hole in the top and put our arms out. I'm more into a sense of style than of what's fashionable. I think you can wear anything if you can carry it off. You don't have to spend a lot of money to be in style. It's got to do with an inner confidence or something.

"Ever since I was a kid the idea of rock and roll and style went hand in hand — you had to dress for the part and everything. But it doesn't necessarily have to do with clothing. It's more to do with personal flair. I'm going to get there on time and stuff. But it doesn't mean driving in a limousine. It could mean stepping down the street with a radio on your shoulder.

"Right now we're keen on the Curtis Sliwa Inc, the Guardian Angels, a group who patrol the subways. That's the latest look I think."

Contributing to the 'forerunners of punk' view of the Dolls is the association of the band with the famous mien of Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren. While the encyclopedias refer to McLaren as managing the band Johansen tells it differently.

"Malcolm McLaren was our haberdasher for a while. He never really worked for us. McLaren per se. He made some clothing for us and he'd come along on some of our road trips and collect the money after the show and stuff like that. But it's not like he sat down and plotted strategy or anything like that. I think he was doing a little pre-Pistols work to see what the business was about. We had more friends and co-workers."

Asked what are the main lessons he's learned from associations with entrepreneurs like McLaren, Johansen answers "Don't sign anything." To what extent was the band in control of its own affairs?

"It was out of control. Nobody knows what was going on. It got to a point where indecisions. We had fired our managers and done this and done that ... it was a democracy but how it turned out was anarchy really. Someone would say do this, someone else would say do that — so we did everything.

"But nobody really cared. Not that we didn't care about our music but as far as the whole business world was concerned, the people who're trying to take you and exploit you — we didn't care about them. It was just let the whole thing explode — see how far all this will go before it's just too ridiculous. We made a living — no big bank accounts but we got by."

In its short lifetime the band was associated with more than one legendary rock entrepreneur. George 'Shadow' Morton, producer and image-maker of such classic purveyors of rock melodrama as the Shangri-Las, produced the Dolls' second and last album, the prophetically titled '*Too Much Too Soon*' in 1974. This link-up turns out to have been more than a record company gimmick — in fact it's an almost classic 'saved by rock and roll' story as Johansen tells it.

"It was like a dream I'd had since I was a kid to work with Shadow, as he was always very important to me. He had been mostly into stock car racing just before he worked with us. He'd been badly beaten up in some car wreck and he was in the hospital. He was getting into this Zen trip, reading all these books and he was convinced he wasn't going to walk any more, that he wasn't going to do anything any more, and we practically pulled him out of bed in the hospital. It was great to work with him. And he turned out walking and quite able after that.

"Shadow had done a lot of things I'd loved. The Shangri-Las especially I was impressed with. He had a way of making a street drama into a life on a record with a certain amount of campiness. He taught me a lot about embellishing a record. Though I wasn't involved in production then, I really was the singer and writer of the group."

Johansen has become much more involved in the production end of his music. He has production credits on all three of his solo albums, shared on the debut '*David Johansen*' with Richard Robinson, on '*In Style*' with former David Bowie and Ian Hunter associate Mick Ronson and on the recent '*Here Comes the Night*' with Blondie Chaplin. And he's known better for his work with [illegible] than for an association with music from the edges of the rock establishment.

"I try to hold up my end of the deal, my responsibility or whatever. I think that since it's my name that's being used I have more of a responsibility — it's not like having a band, it's [illegible] behind the responsibility to put out a good record, a record that's going to have the right effect — a certain kind of liberating effect on the listener."

What are those effects about? I asked Johansen what it was he liked about a song that had effect for him.

"I guess they're kind of [illegible] valid. That's what I like. [illegible]"

how he thought things had changed for him over that period.

"Of course the world is always changing. I think there are a lot more people available now to listen to my music. When the Dolls were out there weren't all that many people into this type of music. But now it's like a whole new generation has come into its own in terms of having musical tastes."

These changes have meant more than an increase in the size of Johansen's potential audience. While the New York Dolls are very strongly identified as a 70s band, it's clear from Johansen's conversation that both his musical tastes and his approach to being a rock and roll performer have roots in the 60s. How important were those years for him?

"The whole thing seemed to be really like a great upsurge of emotions and feelings — that 'enough is enough'. And of course there was the war which was a great unifier of youth. There were so many things happening musically, so many groups coming out of California and all over. It's not like that now — everything is very tried and true, there's very little spontaneity. Like the radio in this country — it's a wreck. It's impossible to listen to. So we listen to the Puerto Rican stations. We don't understand what they're saying but at least they've got a beat."

So does he see the Dolls as having been children of the 60s?

"Yeah, well we kinda went through our pubescence in the 60s and then we emerged in the early 70s. They used to say that the Dolls got the final nail in the coffin of the 60s. There was a feeling of great excitement in it and people being available to try new things. Now it's like no one wants to risk getting their head lowered in."

What does he see then as the place of politics in music?

"Politics is really a dirty word. Really it's disgusting. [illegible] Everybody has to have a certain amount of politics but [illegible] Politics is like a dilemma — you don't know whether to have politics or to be involved in politics. I'm not [illegible] I consider myself a [illegible] bringing people together. As far as my sense of whatever is concerned I just want to set a good example.

"I mean a lot of people are very disgusting and disillusioned and disenchanted. I hope to help bring them together and enjoy one another socially. A lot of people on a roof when we don't know one another [illegible] so people can relate to each other. It's the same thing that happened when the Dolls began — all those people who were disenfranchised came into a room and looked around and realized that they weren't alone. They weren't the only — whatever.

"In the neighbourhood. That there was an army of them. And that happens now more than ever."

Unlike a lot of solo performers with backgrounds in relatively illustrious bands, Johansen is clearly not reluctant at all to talk about the Dolls, or to acknowledge the band's importance in his career. [illegible]

"My career now is more successful than the Dolls ever were. But I consider the Dolls my alma mater — like my old babe. The college of musical knowledge, as an old friend used to say."

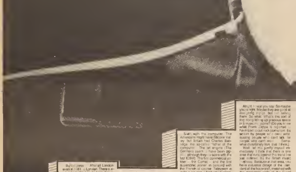
So how are the graduates?

"Yeah — I'm in the working world now, yeah."

And while his tone of voice has the usual tongue-in-cheek inflections, you get the feeling that he really means it.

BRITAIN: A FAREWELL TO ALMS – OR GOODBYE TO 1066 AND ALL THAT?

by Larry Buttrose



As I prepare to evacuate Britain (in the broadest sense of the term), I find myself experiencing misgivings about leaving the old place after all. Yes, things have been hard here. The rock journalist/correspondent in London finds life soon after arrival no easier than the average social-outcast.

But as I look around the empty beer cans, lifeless VDT screens and gap-toothed, stuttering telexes of the "Roadrunner" bureau and as the flure tubes overhead flicker in a pattern to which my brain has become accustomed, I ask myself again whether I have actually begun to like life in Thatcher's England. Thatcher's London. (Actually it's now Ken Livingstone's London. Livingstone is the Leader of the Labour dominated Greater London Council. He won office in May. Since then he has been vilified in the press for personal failings such as the profession of socialist beliefs, support for the H block hunger strikers, liking reggae music, support for oppressed groups such as blacks and homosexuals ... and (gasp) reading SF. As you can tell he's a terrific bloke. ... Hard to believe he's in politics really. The press went absolutely ga ga when they found out how small his bedsit in inner London was and how unpretentious in general the man is ...)

But I digress ... After all London even in 1981 is London. There's always something to do here. For instance, without thinking about it, recently I strolled through incredible exhibits at the Museum of Modern Man, saw Stephen Berkoff's latest play ("Decadence" ... and very good), and was able to get free stock car circuit practice around Hyde Park corner ... and all in the same day. With "Pac Man" video games thrown in somewhere during the afternoon. So once you've got your bearings here and settled in, life in London is still good and exciting. Then you realize that the 9 months of winter will be starting up again soon and the euphoria evaporates again. I find myself wondering (encore) what this set of overcrowded islands possibly has to say for itself this decade, this century. I go over the things in my mind. Gallipoli? France 1940? The Windsors? The Royal Wedding? Once more I examine the track record of this group of small islands in greater depth.

Firstly I thought about the obvious. The artists that it can muster from over the past 7 decades. Well I suppose as a rock writer I have to consider the obvious such as Lydon ... Jagger ... Screaming Lord Sutch ...

But what about your High Art guv'nor? What's Britain had going for it there? A friend of mine who's an up and coming painter suggested a long list of names he was sure were famous ... except for that fact that I had to tell him (gently) that no-one outside art circles outside this set of islands would have known any of the names he had provided except for Hockney. But of course being a painter he had forgotten to mention the man who is truly Britain's most famous artist of the 20th century ... the sculptor Henry Moore. The sculptures you want to feel with your tongue.

I moved on in my meditations to the matter of literature. Nick Kent, the rock aficionado may suggest ... Perhaps. Although Britain's top [illegible] for the present period at least is very arguably an Australian ... John Pilger. That's the man who has tried to inform the world about the barbaric practices taking place in countries like Kampuchea, El Salvador ... Australia. But the writers of fiction and poetry? Well there's Joyce, of course Oscar Wilde, W B Yeats, Shaw, Beckett ... except for the fact that they're all countrymen of Irishman Flann O'Brien. If you can take a lot of purple prose, there's D H Lawrence. Then there's the wonderful writing of T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia), and to stick with the Lawrences, Lawrence Durrell. Orwell's an obvious inclusion as are Woolf and Huxley, Graves and Auden (Except for the fact that Auden was almost an American and T S Eliot, that bastion of English values and C of E convert, was American.) I suppose it's a fairly lazy score. But it does perhaps pale against past glories. And against the collections of other nations ... such as the French with their Sartre & Camus, the US with its Hemingway and Australia's White.

Music then, I consider. Now John Lydon may be suggested ... but actually he only merits a nomination I fear. Lennon & McCartney ... yes. And in your High Art, there's Britten, Williams, Delius ... Elgar? ... Julie Felix? Gene Vincent? John Lydon?

While you're scratching your heads about all this and trying to start filling in the gaping blanks let me consider another aspect of British creativity in the 20th Century so that I may begin to make something approximating a point. Consider British design in the 20th century.

Start with the computer. The Americans might have Silicone Valley but Britain had Charles Babbage, the so-called "father of the computer". The jet engine (The Germans seem to have been pipped, although they do score with the first ICBM). The first commercial jetliner – the Comet – and the first supersonic jetliner in concord with the French of course. Television is quite a big one I think you'd agree. Then we get down the list to the hovercraft, the Spitfire, the MG, the Mini ... No doubt there's many more.

But putting the computer alongside David Hockney (colour the machine pool blue if you wish) does seem to underline one thing. The British this century have excelled in invention, and in industrial design, more so than in any other field of creative endeavour. Where things seem to have gone wrong is what happened to all these inventions when they were ready to be marketed.

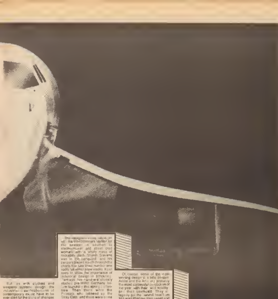
The Americans got the jet plane, the Japanese the TV. They're still fighting over the computer. But Britain [illegible] on any of them. All they got for the computer was a struggling giant corporation ICL, and for the MG and Mini they ended up with British Leyland. Enough said. As my father (who has always had the misfortune to work for British multinationals) has always said – "They haven't got a bloody clue son. They couldn't manage their way out of a country dunny." Let me add to that that the mismanagement is not merely evident in the huge corporations, private and publicly owned. Nor in the corporation of one Margaret Thatcher. It's evident in tiny filthy supermarkets (you're forever washing your hands in London). In buses that only run halfway overloaded and then break down on the return run. In electrical goods suppliers who don't supply a plug with new appliances and who print plug wiring instructions in English only. In post offices and government offices with no pens for public use (the British feel superior to Mexico) and where you queue and queue (the British feel sorry for the Polish).

Alright I hear you say. So maybe you're right. Maybe they are good at designing things, but not selling them. So what. What's this sort of thing doing taking up precious space in a music magazine? (Do you know what Frank Zappa is reported to have said about rock journalism. It's written by people who can't write quizzing people who can't talk for people who can't read. ... Somewhat disturbingly true that I think.)

Well let me justify myself immediately. I think that there is one area that runs against this trend I've just outlined. It's the British music business. Because in that area, you have industrial design of the standard of the hovercraft, matched with the marketing skills of the Royal Wedding team. For me, most contemporary British music is a fine example of industrial design but well marketed. In other words, it deserves to be what it is ... a beacon to other flagging industries.

Just have a glance at the kinds of acts that the industrial designers have been producing en masse over the past few years. One with a successful clothes shop in Chelsea catered for the disaffected trade with the Sex Pistols. That design later changed hands and has since been more subtly handled. In the meantime the previous holder of the franchise, the rag trade man, has turned his eyes to the east (where previous British empires once flourished).

Another highly successful product is the sort of musical equivalent of the B.M.W. ... an aping of German efficiency. This model reached its zenith with the Bowie 76. The designers were in fact so pleased with the performance that they were able to flood the market with an identical one just a few years later, the Numan, with a buddy seat for juniors. Ever since one man Eno had a genuine idea sometime back in the dim wastes of the early 70's the silicone-box designers have been churning out more and more acceptable ranges of their consumers. These products are now almost identical. In fact it has been marketed as the Visage Spandau Ballet Classix Nouveaux Depeche Mode-UltraVox, etc. and it sold especially well in the place where they first rev'ed up the B.M.W. Ah, the ironies of the industrial world. If only Eno could have patented that vacuous, flippant electro-sound. He'd have made a killing on the exchange.



But as with clothes and weapons systems design the industrial draughtspersons of contemporary music have to be ever alert for the signs of changes in fashion. This summer for instance has seen the mass marketing of the street credible female. The music is usually cruddy, the words are nonsensical and so the new lash on has been doomed to success from the very outset. Regardless to clutch the femmes. Toyah. She looks like a stole kid you'd see in Camden Town or some other inner London beat zone. She looks as if she says things she means and she's cultivated a [illegible] to say she really feels things. Then there's Hazel O'Connor. Similar sultors to Toyah (that name too is so marketable – SF meets Japan. Like Godzilla.) Hazel O'Connor again seems to have the ability to appear as though she means it. Her song 'Will You' was good I must admit. But having heard her boring talk on radio here and reading about her precious existence I feel it must have been an aberration. Kim Wilde. Enough said. Kirsty McColl. By the time she had the Elvis song on the boil ('There's a Guy Who Works Down the Chip Shop Swears He's Elvis') the designers really had this summer of the street cred woman on the go she she was assured of success. Kate Bush not so street cred but still superbly marketable as ever joined in with an amazing song that sounded like clashing metal called 'Sat in Your Lap'. The song enshrines the rare achievement of the performer singing a whole 3 minutes with not one word being comprehensible. It sold like crazy. Delightfully mindless like all her stuff.

The designers were equally [illegible] with the predominant fashion for the season in addition to electronicals and street cred woman with a whole mess of rockabilly flash. Shakin Stevens was in the vanguard and his panzers blazed a path through the charts that saw three number one spots fall within a few weeks. It just goes to show the importance of industrial design in blitzkrieg. Perhaps his handlers closely studied pre-WW2 Germany before launching this spring offensive. Then there were the Polecats who followed up the Stray Cats and there were some other cats too but it's a few weeks back now and I can't remember much about it at all. Suffice it to say the rockabilly thing was a success the moment it got off the drawing board and the marketing boys and girls really did render superb support to the boffins on this one.

The last major strand in the tapestry of design codes has been the stunning success of the only honest music of the season. This started with the first 'Stars on 45' [illegible] forth the Abba medley, and the British designers realised that if they didn't get in on this pretty fast they'd lose out on a big one. The TV shows were already going for it, it was really shipping fast. They struck back with a vengeance. No, they didn't release a medley of 'Stars on 45' medleys nor a bootleg 'Stars on 45's Greatest Hits' played by the Midnight Strings. What they did produce in a commendable production span was a Beachboys medley, Bee Gees medley, a Caribbean medley and a few other medleys. With the target group primed the product moved fast. The medleys swept all before them and another success for British industrial design was at hand. In this case the kernel of the design concept had been Dutch. For once the British were on the winning end not having actually thought up the concept but getting in on the really important part of the process – the cashing in. With the 'Stars on 45' schtick they pulled at least something back for the lost computer and Baird's TV.

Of course some of the most winning design is a little deviant. Adam and the Ants are probably the most successful concoction of the year with their wild nobility and their sexmusic. They allegedly got the Burundi beat from McLaren (that rag man again) and their clothes from the Swamp Fox [illegible] know that it's all really a wonderful laugh and never to be taken seriously. Adam Ant sends up his own narcissism and the whole thing ends up not so much as the product of the music machine but more kind than that, almost endearing in its insincerity. Speaking of which one can also compliment Roxy Music. Minus Eno they're nowheresville in the creativity department but at least there's no [illegible] next release a 'Stars on 45' cover with Ferry's ghoulish voice and buzzard caws re-capturing the faded glories of popular music.

Ultravox must also get a mention. These boys really must walk around with hot sausages stuck up their rectal passages – there's no other way to explain the pained expressions and mostly silly music they have been producing in the name of pop. Recently 'The Face', a colour glossy monthly that 'The Observer' commented had returned rock journalism to 1967 and to ('what is the lead singer's favourite food?' – did a story (I mean photo spread with words) on them. They were in Berlin that bleak home of hippies and armies of occupation. There were pictures of the boys in d'entre guerre overcoats and trenchcoats looking like merchant bankers who always wanted to paint, all against impressive state structures beneath a leaden German sky, capped by a caption about their 'self imposed creative stress'. Say no more.

However there's still rea[illegible]

The Specials produced a wonderful song which kept the rubbish back from the top of the charts here for a few weeks. Strange but 'Ghost Town' also turned out to be the theme song for the summer riots, being prophetically released just before they got underway. Madness also continued to be interesting. I saw two good novelty style acts – the wonderful ex surf band the Barracudas and the hardline country schtup Hank Wangford band. But despite these and a few others I've forgotten it's mostly sausage machine stuff. In fact in general pop music has been one of the biggest letdowns of London. Most of it is predictable boring packaged. But then that's what they're about at, isn't it? Design. They start with the outfits, the milieu and genre stuff. Then the music comes off the drawing board sometime later. Of course it happens in Australia as well. But to a lesser extent I think. Australia has bands like the Sports, Paul Kelly, Redgum, No Fixed Address for whom the music is still the thing that matters. I hope.

I return from my reverie. The Roadrunner bureau ... the light still flickering in the flue above, and now the pattern has become more of a neurological migrant. I feel very weary. While I'll miss a lot of things about Ken Livingstone's London. I'll miss Soho and its restaurants, the Charing Cross Road bookshops, the Covent Garden cafes, Hampstead Heath, squirrels in Queen's Wood, the Underground. I'll miss the opportunity to see the parts of our culture, i.e. films, TV programmes, books, heritage, that have always been impressed upon me in Australia as important and being able to make my own assessment of them on the spot. I'll miss the intelligence of Londoners. I'll miss the good newspapers (which actually report world events and whose writing makes these reports compelling reading.) I'll miss just being close to the rest of the world too. But I won't miss Britain's rock music. I think I'm probably just too old for the fancy clothes.

Austral

tian Crawl

WARD•13

ALF OMEGA: FROM TICKET CLERK TO PLAYING A PART IN A SPEED FREAK MOVIE

by Toby Cluechaz

pic: Eric Algra

A punk scene of sorts developed in Adelaide around The Centrale Hotel in 1979. It was a tacky cold dark 50s hotel, a fitting sentinel for the railway yards across the road. Band contingents and peripherals gathered and were seen there. DNA Fanzine reported the goings on; the audience was small and knowing. Good nights happened and bad nights happened; it was anything but romantic.

Alf Omega's first band The Vainables had a residency at The Centrale, a residency they shared with other [illegible] bands. A dining room the size of a large lounge room was their stage and hall. The Vainables played a never ending set of tired songs as first bands are wont to do in those days. Alf contorted behind keyboards in a blank and red railway jacket, sweat saturated within the first two songs. Mascara dropped around wards. Each song was a desperate cry on the waves of bludgeoning sound. This painful spectacle kept its agog. The snap-rooted sense of belief that only your first band can engender. Nobody supported The Vainables for they were unfashionable among the fashionable pundits. Somewhat akin The Centrale closed its doors to music like Punk preferring a charcoal steak room to exist instead. It continued for The Vainables until the external internal ... not only rock nan minstrel cut the jugular. One long knife too many equals an urn full of ashes.

Empty flagons began to pile up at Alf's back door, garbage was forgotten, ever left for the council. Long nights spent trying to gauge the wrongness of it all, waking up to the lights and the [illegible]. Summer approaches and Alf Omega took his one man act to Rundle Mall, Adelaide's first and only punk busker. Instant attention was easily forthcoming among the doomsday cripples. Dylan for a family. A blank skin and a dog collar were procured. The Pursuit of Punk was born. Sex Pistols and ... originals were louder through an acoustic guitar and a lonesome voice. Alms were summoned and begotten. A crowd formed, half spawned police. Blue rinse ladies and pensioners were tickled and complained. The inevitable Rundle Mall ban was enforced.

Many acquaintances were made from the human traffic. What became was The Silver Trains, a straight rock n roll Jagger gyrator. Nothing happened except for the well glued sex at least. Exit one light, greatest for the hard and last variety that can think. A name change to The Spell. Alf Omega (vocals), Jim Selene (bass), Mick Brown (rhythm guitar), Vido (lead guitar), Andre (drums). Alf's dirty soul had now found a musical balance that could push and excavate something that rock sensibilities in its ... artists. Onwards.

TC The title of the interview is from Ticket Clerk to Playing a Part in a Speed Freak Movie. What encouraged you to leave that proletarian army (Railways) for the lights of rock n roll?

Omega: Ah Ah now we get on to some ancient history. I left school at the age of seventeen and got a job with the railways. To which I gradually climbed the ranks to the position of ticket clerk. I had the ambition to get my own station at Long Gully or somewhere, mushrooms and all that. Generally a place where I could do my own thing with one train passing through every week. Then they started closing all these little stations. I became very urban and neutralised. I decided to leave the railways because I was working at Tape ... and getting beat up by all the local heads each day. All of my friends started going to University and all that. I felt a bit left out. Eventually I went back to school to do my Matriculation with the purpose of going to Uni and doing God knows what. At the time I didn't play any musical instrument; that was at the age of twenty. I had been writing a real lot of poetry up to then and poetry is a real nowhere art form. Poetry isn't much of a performance thing. I really wanted to perform after getting the bug with my involvement in school plays. Eventually I bought an old piano that was hopelessly out of tune. I didn't know enough about music to know that the piano was out of tune. On the 23rd of July 1975 I learnt where middle C was on the piano. That was the beginning. From the start I wanted to be like Beethoven or Mozart; it was only a few years later that I finally got into Punk Rock after the event. That's when I realised that you didn't have to be a virtuoso to make valid musical statements. Oh yeah I also finished my Matriculation.

One day after a sleepless night
I woke up to a mosquito bite
She had the nicest eyes I've ever
seen
I thought I loved her but it was just
the amphetamines
I was playing a part a part in a
Speed Freak Movie

Omega

TC I think not one person would dissent if I called you Adelaide's most energetic performer. Are there any drawbacks to that localised distinction in the sense that you are giving the pop star performance before you are officially declared a pop star?

Omega: Well when I started off my career at The Centrale Hotel the response was fear and loathing. Umm I don't think I really knew how to direct it then. I suppose I do feel a lot more confident about it now. I've got some reputation which I've earned the hard way. I can tell you that I made a lot of mistakes earning that reputation. The first Spell gigs were fantastic surprises because no-one really knew what I was capable of doing. They had seen me in The Mall or in The Silver Trains or The Vainables but they never knew what I was capable of being up front in a really good band. The only drawback to my performance if you can call it a drawback is the surprise people experience on seeing me for the first time. Because of this each gig is really hard. I have to go one step further than the time before.

TC Do you feel trapped in this wild man image? How far are you prepared to go?

Omega: I think if I wasn't prepared to go the distance I wouldn't have come this far. I guess the ultimate thing I can do is kill myself on stage. Maybe one day I will if somebody doesn't do it before hand.

TC Would you agree that your stage presentation has been toned down in recent times? Has there been a weighing up of alcohol dosage and commercial necessity?

Omega: (Laughter) Alcohol is a great thing to get into after the gig, but beyond about two glasses of wine I can tell you performance ... I've found that out a few times since The Spell has been happening. When it gets to the point of forgetting lyrics and missing your cues it doesn't matter how full on it is, you're only letting the band and the audience down. And I've also got a dangerous habit of shooting my mouth off when I'm drunk. I might say something that could be used as evidence against me later on. If I've had a heavy workload leading up to a gig that's usually when I turn on the fireworks. I don't really think my image has toned down just because I'm sober. I think I'm more full on now. When I write something I haven't got commercially in mind. I just write for The Spell.

TC Does your approach to performing only entail a certain amount of frenzied body movements and the audible release of words or does it lie in a mental state rather than the visual one we perceive?

Omega: Frenzied body movements can be totally cliched in this era. What I do is very real, very tough. I'm reliving the sins of my past. It's a total commitment to my past. I'm on a personal purge.

TC At one time you described your music as manic intensive verging on

the psychotic. If that definition still stands could you tell us what it encompasses?
Omega: You'll go far maybe I should write an essay on it. Intensity is a word I tend to think about a lot these days. Manic is a meaningless word. Intensity is when your veins stick out. Intensity is the sort of thing when you don't know if you're going to get through a song alive. The intensity is very real, the psychotic is a pose. But then I am psychotic and I'm not psychotic on stage. Definitely the word intensity is a very good description of what I am about.

pic Eric Algra

TC: All your songs are written in the first person. Does your Punk Dream (anthem) hinge on the celebration of your own life?
Omega: Umm... I don't think I would be very convincing trying to celebrate someone else's life. I go through a lot of things... I think I have enough experiences of my own to keep my rock career well fed with ideas. Then that's not to say that I can't get inside a song that Mick (rhythm guitar) has written. I really relate to his song *He Loves You*. Sometimes when I sing that I feel an incredible sense of tragedy. The fact that Mick has written this song about a very pure form of love... a sort of love I have never been able to give anyone. When I sing that song I think about my own relationships and how I've mistreated people. So ah I do tend to get more into the songs that I've written about my own life but that doesn't alter the fact that I can get into other people's songs. I suppose it's kind of weird. I'm trying to make a success out of life by singing about the negative aspects in my life. I don't know whether raving on about my own tragic life is really going to be the recipe for The Spell's success. It could drag people down. I think maybe part of the key to our success could be songs that Mick or Andre (drums) have written. They're much more accessible than mine in the sense that they're not depressing.

TC: Would you consider the point that people might find more substance in tragedy than say banal love songs?
Omega: It's probably true but I don't know if people really want to work themselves out. People just want to escape... it must be very unnominnable for people watching me sing *I Get Scared* or *Land Speed Record*. I know I'm getting a reaction from these songs which is good in a sense but they're not commercial success songs. It's no fluke that most songs that get to the top of the charts are bullshit. People want to retreat into bullshit because the truth is pretty hard to face up to. Not that love songs are always bullshit.

Hey Principal
And all you educators
You're just a coven of manipulators
with your books and bibles
I'm not gonna be one of your disciples
I don't believe you
I don't think you've got very much integrity
Omega

TC: Many of your songs dwell on relationships that dissolve by violence. Is violence your muse, the main motivational factor in your music?
Omega: The violence that I've got inside of me and which comes out all too often... it comes out when I try to get close to someone. Umm... the violence... I spend so much of my time feeling remorse for the violent things I have done. And I generally write songs when I'm depressed, a lot of my depression comes from remorse... the way I have treated people when they try to get close to me. Violence plays such a strong part in my life I can't help but find it be a very strong inspiration. I guess relationships are probably... a fruitful source of inspiration.

She hit me up I was low at first vein
She did it good I didn't feel no pain
When she hit me up I loved her like a wife
But when the drug wore off I nearly took
her life
Omega

TC: Do you hold some contempt for love?
Omega: In my life definitely. Love is a hard thing for me to talk about. I've only experienced it once. I found that when she was around I couldn't do anything creatively musically. I just didn't want to. I just wanted to give her lots of love so I couldn't be bothered playing music. The life I lead demands me to give up certain things. It makes it impossible for me to be really close to anyone. I'm a rock n roll monk.

TC: Are you at loggerheads with the feminist movement?
Omega: Ah, I've been waiting for that one (gleeful). I believe in their cause but I believe the feminists are at loggerheads with me. When I was in Rundle Mall (busking) I wrote a few deliberately offensive songs. I just wanted people to notice me. And so I wrote a few songs like the infamous *Under Fifteen*. It was more for reaction than anything else. Then all of a sudden I got this really strong feminist backlash against me. At the time my first reaction was to write a whole lot more songs that were even more sexist than *Under Fifteen*. Umm... and then The Silver Trains happened with all The Rolling Stones implications that go with it and umm... I just got into being proud of every revolting thing I said. Until I eventually realised that I was alienating people I didn't want to alienate. So for a while I was just trying to antagonize the feminist movement. When I became famous to a certain extent I didn't see the need to carry on like that any more. I started writing songs that had more integrity in the lyrics. It really pisses me off these days when people say The Spell are sexist. That's just a load of crap. The feminists are still holding my past against me. We don't play *Under Fifteen* anymore for Christ's sake! I do plead guilty on my past efforts.

I like em dumb
I like em blonde
I like em specially when they're easy
to do carnal
I like em sweet
I like em fair
I really like it when they don't
really care
Cos I'm a lecherous lover
You can never tell where I've been
I'll make love to you my pretty one
But only if you're under fifteen
Omega

TC: Ecclesiastical imagery tends to rear its head in some of the songs. Are you suppressing a certain truthfulness that you find in religion?
Omega: In 1977 when Punk Rock was really happening I was a Christian happy living in the country.

I sort of got gang banged into it for a while. I was pretty earnest about it. And I was fortunate to fall in love with somebody who wasn't a Christian. That helped me to get out. And I guess ever since I've been... it's a very very hard thing to give up being a Christian. You have to say horrible but truthful things against it. I've thought in ecclesiastical imagery for a long time. It was all in that poetry I wrote before taking up music. If I got into Christianity totally I'd most probably be a very happy person. But I wouldn't be into r n r. I wouldn't be into anything but Christianity. That seems a pretty mindless thing to do just for some happiness. I guess there is a definite yearning for happiness within me but it's at odds with my yearning for material glory. The only way I could escape the tragedy I'm in is by giving everything up for something that is at odds with r n r.

TC: During your period as a busker you did a few supporting gigs at rock venues. Was supporting Midnight Oil at The Tivoli a daunting experience, just you and your acoustic guitar against their combined might?
Omega: No, not after the first flagon (uproarious laughter). Yes, it's pretty strange to support one of the greatest r n r bands in the world with just an acoustic guitar. Yeah I got up there and just did my thing, gosh was I drunk. You might have recalled me crawling behind the amplifier after every song for a sip on my second flagon. I'm really glad I did that because I had an amazing chat with Peter Garrett afterwards. Too bad I can't remember what I said though.

TC: The only difference between your previous band The Silver Trains and The Spell is Viktor on guitar. Has his inclusion into the band dramatically changed your songs, are they sounding like you envisaged?
Omega: They never really... often they sound better than I envisaged them. Often I write a song and what I envisage is the music coming from the piano or the acoustic guitar, the instruments that I compose on. And Viktor... he amazes me. Umm certainly since Viktor has been in the band we've been putting out more power, more so than The Silver Trains.

TC: In some circles The Spell would be described as an archetypal Australian band, the fast and furious variety. Would you consider the point that your lyrics are the only original component in the sound?
Omega: Turn the tape off. I've really got to think hard about this one. Fuck. I think we can be a bit more geographically explicit. It's probably... I think we can narrow it down to Sydney Rock n Roll being made in Sydney, a more of a blood and guts thing like Midnight Oil and Cold Chisel. We're definitely a Sydney band although we come from Adelaide. And we... Oh Jesus Christ, if that's a criticism in your question then it's most probably a valid one. I think the style of music we play is the best vehicle for what we're saying even though it borrows a lot from Midnight Oil and The Angels. Like it's the best music to go over the top to (said emphatically). But I think in recent times some of our more recent stuff is a bit more psychedelic... I remember seeing the fifth day Party and being totally transfixed. I think that's a possible area where Viktor can overcome his limitations because Viktor's a very psychedelic guitarist. Just lately I've been writing songs that are a lot more sparser. Our music is interesting... I think originality in 1981 depends on how you put your influences together. Let alone r n r, there's only three or four chords to every song. If you put more than half a dozen chords in one song it's not r n r anymore.

TC: What are The Spell offering us that we haven't seen or heard before? Why should we look upon The Spell as serious contenders?
Omega: I guess basically we're only offering you the same old bloody fad you've been offered for the last twenty five years. We're just basically a bunch of people who want to be rich enough to take all the drugs we want to take. If we were to do something totally original nobody would be interested.

Let's go to the Ivory Tower
Dead set it's a lust for power
Leave your friend behind you
Come along to the Ivory Tower
Let's go let's get it right
Let those starving little girls run wild
tonight
Oh yeah in the Ivory Tower
Omega

TC: Andre and Mick have written songs comparable to your own. Do you have to overcome many barriers in interpreting other people's songs?
Omega: In the case of Andre's songs the main barrier I have to overcome is the limitations of my own voice. Andre's got a much higher voice than I've got so he composes songs that really should be sung high. We've tried lots and lots of his songs and they just haven't worked. We're going to try to do a couple more of his songs in the near future, he's starting to make allowances for my voice. As for Mick's songs I've never really had any trouble singing his songs. Probably because he isn't as fussy as Andre. Andre is very much the perfectionist.

I've got a fashionable computer
She knows all the tricks
When I feed in her programme
She turns out 80's synthesizer licks
Tho she gets a little dosing
By being perfectly in time
Her flashing lights and modulator rings
are never stuck for a modern rhyme
Andre

TC: In the last couple of months songs such as *Murdoch's Guitar Rag* and *Nuclear Soldier* have appeared in the repertoire. The two songs mentioned have a definite political slant, are you moving away from sex to politics? What's brought about this noticeable change of heart?
Omega: I think it's... I think I'm moving away from chauvinism towards integrity. This is definitely tied in with the feminist thing we were talking about before. I just came to the realisation that as a songwriter I have a certain responsibility to speak the truth. There's only so many things you can say about sex I guess. Umm... I think this change has a lot to do with The Clash's influence. I'm totally and utterly into The Clash. I listen to The Clash all day long. I love The Clash you know, it's one of my ambitions in life to get one of my songs on a Clash album. I would love to hear one of my songs... *Murdoch's Guitar Rag* would sound great on a Clash album. When I perform that song I get into all my Joe Strummer impersonations really well (laughter).

TC: Can we expect an independent release from The Spell in the not too distant future? Or is the strategy one of waiting for the major record companies to become interested?
Omega: It will be wait for the major record companies to become interested, it will be because of our finance situation. There's not much money behind this band at all. We would all like to put something out on vinyl. There's no point in spending a thousand bucks on a single if no-one's going to be particularly interested though. If we put one out at the moment there would be more copies in my living room than in other people's homes. If we had a lot of money behind us we would have put heaps and heaps of independent singles out by now. We've got enough good songs to put out a double album. If we had the money we would put out a double album. Possibly because of economic reasons we will have to wait till a record company signs us before we release anything.

TC: The Spell recently supported The Church at Pub Sport Arena (Stage Door Adelaide). The show was a combined effort between 5SSA FM and the Stage Door management, over 2000 people were in attendance so why didn't you get paid?
Omega: Because they didn't want to pay the support band any money and we wanted the gig for publicity more than the money. But umm, there are a lot of things I can say about that but I prefer to wait for about five years. In five years time ask me about promoters in this city and I will tell you everything you want to know.

TC: What were your impressions of that gig in relation to the size of the audience and the reaction you received?
Omega: For us it was the big event. Such a big event in fact that I took amphetamines for the first time ever before a gig. We knew it was the big night, we had to pull out all stops and we did. We were very much at the crossroads when we did that gig, there had been some bitching going on behind the scenes. I'm sure if we turned in a lousy gig that night we would have split. I got myself full of pills. I was positive... I was absolutely jumping out of my skin. I spent half an hour backstage jumping around getting ready for it. We all went on there... the wonderful thing about The Spell is we always deliver the goods on the big occasion. It's on the other occasions that we get really suspect. Everything went right that night. When you're really positive you never break strings. Apparently on the dance floor, which is a long way away from the stage, all these people were dancing to our music in a way that rarely ever happens in Adelaide. We got a response that I could have never imagined. If there's enough people packed shoulder to shoulder we're going to go over well.

TC: You've been paying your dues for quite a while now, do you look on rock n roll with any distaste at all?
Omega: It's the hardest profession on earth (said with grit). I love it and I hate it. I love it because it gives me a good orgasm. It's more fun than having sex. When The Spell does a bad gig I feel like committing suicide.

TC: Is it do or die for you?
Omega: More like do or become a Christian.

TC: Did you really say that you would even sleep with Molly to get on Countdown. Would you like to take this opportunity to make an official proposition to him?
Omega: Umm... well I made that statement in a cafe in Rundle Mall talking to Ig Nawd and Vortex Vomit (Punk Fanzine). And ah I guess I had strong feelings for the nubile nymphs on the Countdown set. I would have given anything at that stage to get on Countdown even if it involved sleeping with Molly. I'm certainly not going to make any proposition to Molly because I don't fancy the guy. As for going on Countdown it doesn't seem that important as it did then. It would be really wonderful not to have to go on Countdown. If it was the only way I was going to make it in r n r then I would appear on it. I would like to think that that would never be necessary.

Sometimes you can get so tired
That's the time when you've gotta get
wired
Make sure the needle's clean
Have a bit of methedrine
You gotta play a part in a
Speed Freak Movie
Omega.

PRACTICAL JOKERS
SWINGERS
The Swingers debut album taking you on a musical adventure....
37635

ASPECTS OF THE AUSTRALIAN TOP FORTY, 1971-77
by ADRIAN RYAN

THE RISE AND FALL OF SHERBET

In the dingy recesses of Batman's used record shop in Melbourne, they're crammed together in the section marked S Z, Uriah Heep next to Andy Williams, Sweet reposing uncomfortably with Frank Sinatra on the shore where all of yesterday's heroes are washed up. And here from worn album covers Sherbet still grin with all the flash confidence of teen idols riding an endless wave, never daring to think where it will land them.

Remember how you loved them, or hated them? They were hard to ignore: twelve successive hit singles in under five years, hundreds of thousands of albums sold, Daryl Braithwaite and his polished charisma as predictable as the fact of Countdown itself, the simpering smiles and shining hair on all those young girls' bedroom walls.

It seems so long ago, and it was another era; the early seventies were a strange boomtime. A pre-recession interlude when the results of the late fifties-early sixties baby boom reached pubescence and had pocket money to burn on a massive array of glitzily packaged product from David Cassidy to Ziggy Stardust, from the Osmonds to Gary Glitter, mopping glam rock and worthless pop. It was a time when there was a lot of money to be milked from adolescent fantasy and in Australia no one did it as successfully as Sherbet and their handlers.

Their market penetration verged on the phenomenal – they certainly exploited their potential more effectively than even Gary Glitter and Suzi Quatro (who were probably more popular in relative terms in Australia than they were in Britain) and after Skyhooks' brief reign ended Sherbet effectively led the pack. The latter's importance in superficial terms was a presentation that brought colour, flash and overt sexuality back to local pop, but their relationship with their teenybopper audience was always an edgy one, and in the end it was Sherbet who were the winners in the battle for teenage hearts and minds.

Greg Macainsh once made the astute comment that Skyhooks 'couldn't have risen under a Liberal government', but if the Hooks were the band who wrote the anthems for the new cultural nationalism of the Whitlam era, Sherbet provided escapist, brilliantly tasty fairy floss that touched on sexual or racial politics. And eerily enough, the Sherbs' fortune rose to their glittering peak and Skyhooks' began their commercial decline at the same time as the Fraser coup d'etat dashed the hopes of the Carlton intelligentsia who rose with Whitlam.

And true to the principles of the work ethic, Sherbet made it the hard way. For the Hooks success came almost overnight (hip middle class Melbourne adolescents were well aware of them long before they released their first single) but Sherbet arrived with no such flash and flair. They were just another band of imageless young hopefuls banging around the dives of Sydney back in '71 when they signed to Festival and released *Can You Feel It Baby*, a fine piece of ethereal pop that did nothing and was followed by a similarly unsuccessful cover of Delaney and Bonnie's *Free The People*.

Pushing themselves as a vaguely pallid blue eyed soul band and still (in the case of future pretty boy keyboardist Garth Porter) hiding behind beards, Sherbet seemed headed for a premature ride to the dumper when they scored a support slot on Creedence's Oz tour and picked up a snappy grinding little rocker called *You're All Woman* from Ted Mulry. Daryl Braithwaite perfected his Stevie Winwood imitation in the studio and the band finally breached the national charts.

Sherbet, meanwhile, were still to reach their peak. That came with the release of their superb *Greatest Hits* (possibly the finest set of Oz pop-rock ever released) and in 1975 the band's biggest hit and finest single to date, *Summer Love*, was rendered only slightly less than classic by drippy lyrics but riding on thunderous drums, slashing power chords and a great Braithwaite vocal, it deserves to be filed next to the best summer singles by the Beach Boys, Lovin' Spoonful and the Rascals. When Daryl sang 'everyone's talking 'bout the summertime blues/but that ain't true' he was defiantly proclaiming a vision of Australian seasons in the sun as defined by a decade of TV commercials, and you knew he meant every word.

Summer Love was followed by such increasingly sophisticated material as *Child's Play* and by this time Sherbet were the hottest live act in the land. They were cleaning up a fortune on the road with their self-promoted shows (staged with what was for Australia enormous professionalism) which had become archetypal rituals of audience hysteria that equalled the reception given to the Easybeats in their brief reign at the top in the mid 60s.

Meanwhile, the band were playing the role of rock aristocracy to the hilt. The Sherbs would hang in Sydney nightspots with the cream of Australian groupiedom and mandrax high society, at the same time monopolising Countdown and rock gossip columns. Rivals like JPY and Ted Mulry were no real threat, and even the mighty Hooks were beaten into submission. One remembers Red Symons reclining on a couch during one of his notorious appearances on Countdown, camping, conducting a bitchy phone interview with Daryl, but by 1976 there was no doubt as to who had superseded Shirley and cohorts on the bedroom walls and school book covers of the nation.

In classic fashion, though, the seeds of decline were being sown at the heights of glory. The unnoticed turning point in Sherbet's career came when Clive Shakespeare casually bailed out while the going was good. He was temporarily replaced by Gunther Gorman and then permanently by Harvey James, not only a slick technician (he was previously with Ariel) but sufficiently photogenic to fit perfectly into the lineup.

By this time, Sherbet were ripe for overseas success, and the necessary launching pad came with *Howzat*, the first single of the post Shakespeare regime. It was the band's biggest ever local hit, and when released in Britain shot to number two in the charts. It also broke Sherbet in America, where the band signed with MCA (a relationship soon to turn sour) and managed to crack the top thirty, a feat yet to be equalled by the vaunted new wave of Oz superstars.

They also obtained a manager in the shape of Roger Davies, an extrovert Svengali of the type who enjoys seeing his name on billboards and his photos on album covers. He quickly seized on Sherbet's potential, had some pin up photos taken and pushed the band relentlessly at a waiting female audience.

But it wasn't until their third single, the well penned *You've Got The Gun* that Sherbet finally gave notice they were an exceptional commodity. No doubt as could be expressed with its tense stalking bass line and chill bar moans this was a super pop single, a magic moment that could never be quite recaptured even though the band rerecorded it in later more desperate days.

By this time Sherbet had stabilised their line up into a perfectly matched set of pin ups. Tony Mitchell, possessed of a little boy lost physique, had replaced Bruce Worrall on bass. Alan Sandow provided a macho surfie image, Daryl Braithwaite was the epitome of the boy next door – (his uncomplicated attitudes bearing more than a little resemblance to those of the new generation of sports heroes such as Jeff Thomson) with Garth Porter providing a necessarily angelic presence.

And last but hardly least was guitarist Clive Shakespeare. He may not have had a pretty face but he was a superb trash-rock guitarist with a knack for writing hooks and riffs that stuck like paper glue. His co-writer was Garth Porter but Shakespeare seemed to have the upper hand in the partnership after his departure from the band Sherbet's cutting edge disappeared almost immediately.

And meanwhile the hits kept coming. By mid 73 the Sherbs were becoming unstoppable. The yearning *Cassandra* and a second album (the not entirely worthless *On With The Show*) were succeeded by the glitter stomp of *So Glad You're Mine*, the totally kitsch *Slipstream* – title track of the third album – and a brilliant underhand grab at the MOR market with *Silvery Moon*. In late 74 Daryl cleaned up as a solo act with a glutinous cover of *You're My World* and in 1975 came a live album decorated with no less than two colour shots of the triumphant Braithwaite glowing in red and gold like some mutant idol from outer space.

But predictably Sherbet still had fantasies of themselves as real musicians, illusions that were indulged on their albums. Unlike their English glitter contemporaries they weren't kept on the straight and narrow by cynical production teams and the results were often highly erratic. The nadir was reached on the dreadful *Life ... Is For Living* concept album where they attempted Yes like heights and ended up with a set of songs that sounded like rejects from an advertising campaign for transcendental meditation. The *Slipstream* album is their only set apart from the compilations worthy of much investigation, including as it does two fine chemical odes in *Hendy Mandy* and *Earthquake In My Head* (a tribute to angel dust) as well as a chugging rocker *Wild Lane* that would hold its own on any T Rex album.

The cover of *Slipstream* also froze for posterity Sherbet at the height of their androgynous glitter phase when they adopted the bricklayer in drag mode favoured at the time by Sweet and later adopted by such as Spandau Ballet. But even in full make-up the Sherbs could never be as ambiguously subversive as Skyhooks – rather they were taking their place in a time honoured tradition of ocker transvestism (a tradition maintained by Jimmy and The Boys and which reached an apogee at a notorious gig by the latter at Bombay Rock in 1980 which saw the Reels' David Mason prancing on stage in Marlene Dietrich drag while Iggy sang *Cocksucker Blues* and various male members of the audience got down to hilarious and indescribable business on the dancefloor.)

Not that Sherbet ever got down in such raunchy fashion on stage; their inoffensiveness was still a prime asset particularly with the arrival of Countdown which gave their career a massive boost as they and John Paul Young were gratefully seized upon by Ian Meldrum as clean cut material for the show's target audience. And meanwhile the whole teenybopper phenomenon was creating fundamental changes in the Australian industry. As well as kicking recording and performing standards into line with those of overseas it gave birth to a host of short lived magazines like *Scream* and in the wake of Sherbet's success, a shift of the centre of things to Sydney. In their wake came the whole Albert stable of AC/DC, Ted Mulry, JPY and the mysteriously dreadful William Shakespeare (soon to go under on a carnal knowledge charge) all of them storming the charts with superb pop rockers made under the supervision of Vanda and Young.

The band set off on a club tour of England, their first and last expedition to that country and returned like conquering heroes, little knowing that near-oblivion was only a year away. Portents of the decline were in the air. The lavish *Howzat* album was a soft-centred musical failure with the only remotely tough track being the funk riffed *The Swap*, a tale of sordid nights at the Bondi Lifesaver where (shock! horror!) a randy queen with big brown eyes slips Rockwell T a double sunrise.

The search for a follow up to *Howzat* proved surprisingly difficult. In America the inglorious *If I Had My Way* bombed and back home both *Magazine Madonna* and *High Rolling* (a pair of second rate Supertramp and Marley rip-offs respectively) failed to take off in the expected manner but the Sherbs forged on. The packaging of the *Photoplay* album was outrageously over the top with a twelve page glossy booklet featuring photos by famed London pop iconographer Gered Mankowitz, but the music was vacuous, lush and forgettable.

In June 77 one of those strange months in which rock n'roll undergoes sudden sea changes the Sherbs set out on their last big tour supported on their major city dates by Dragon who were soon to mop up what was left of the teenybopper market. The very week that Sherbet hit the road, the Sex Pistols were topping the charts for the first time in Britain, the Stranglers released *Rattus Norvegicus* and Radio Birdman were conducting a blitzkrieg of Melbourne pubs. An unknown Adelaide band called the Angels were releasing their first album and Juke was carrying an article on punk rock. Soon satin bomber jackets were going to be very much out of fashion.

The tour set some new standards in lavish presentation but the smoke bombs couldn't disguise the fact that Sherbet were becoming the beached whales of Australian pop. At least though they were determined to go out firing. The live album *Caught In The Act* caught them at their peak performing moment, polished, trashy as ever and packing a brass-knuckled punch that reached heights on numbers like *Matter Of Time* (check Harvey James' scything lead guitar) and *Skywalking* that demonstrated they had to fear from the rising competition when it came to the occasional rock n roll virtues.

The story of Sherbet's final decline and fall is too tedious to relate here and it wasn't accompanied by any noticeable musical achievements. They moved to America where they blew their accumulated fortunes while being chewed up by the corporate music machine making an album in their short lived Highway incarnation which gave them one last hit single (*Another Night On The Road* – at last, a boring "real" rock song).

Meanwhile they'd become the whipping boys of such rising stars as Cold Chisel and Dave Warner (who's yet to produce anything with the vernacular brilliance of *Howzat*) and the tide of demographic change ran against them. Having so effectively exploited their chosen market they had no future with a new generation of punters who saw them as irretrievable wimps. They came home from America, broke up, reformed and played around the pubs to zero response, discarding their past and sinking to the level of playing Bruce Springsteen to prove their integrity.

For their pains they keep getting nominated as Worst Band in the annual RAM readers polls, which might just indicate they're doing something right, but in actuality is a symptom of how effectively they did their job of being the ultimate teen idols in their years at the top. Manager Roger Davies predictably was the survivor. Today he lives in LA where he handles people such as Olivia Newton John (with whom Daryl once went to school!) And the five aging heroes of a million adolescent dreams themselves sulk in semi-retirement, consoling themselves with the fact that their latest piece of slick AOR nonsense recently made the American album charts. Farewell Sherbet your place may be in the bargain bins and the fading files of TV Week but you don't deserve to be forgotten.

HOW DO YOU MAKE A PAN-GALLACTIC GARGLEBLASTER

Refer to
THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY. AVAILABLE NOW

ORIGINAL RECORDS POWDERWORKS THRU RCA

ICEHOUSE

LOVE IN MOTION

45 REGULAR

DEF LEPPARD
are young

DEF LEPPARD
thump & pump

DEF LEPPARD
play tough Rock

DEF LEPPARD

the new LP **High 'n' Dry** Available Now

6359 045 7150 045 VERTIGO FROM POLYGRAM RECORDS

MARC — MY WORD!

MARC HUNTER
The Grainstore Tavern
Melbourne

As expected the clientele at the Grainstore Tavern turned out to be perfectly suited to Marc Hunter's band's slick automat brand of tropico funk stylizations. Touting all the right blends of spirits and simply the most casual print shirts, designer denims and hand crafted boots the guys and gals were all white smiles and hip bouncy butts as the band (being right out of place with T shirts and pimples) slid smoothly through fifteen numbers with barely more than polite applause. (Oh for those yesterdays of fab teen screams!)

Not so expected was the maturity and promise of Marc Hunter's new songs. Also not so expected was the lack of razzle dazzle all star treatment and pompous hoo haa that I suspected Hunter would have surrounded himself with. About the only thing which really grated was when the instrumentalists in the band either ran up to Hunter to act out their star fantasies or just dirtily [illegible] themselves with their clenched teeth-pelvic thrust guitar solos and their [illegible] posing which provided them with their only major problem for the night — whether to pose for the audience or flash the groupies at the side of the stage.

So at last we level out to determine the value in what is always the bottom line: the songs and how they fit in (or out) with the environment in which they are performed. There were two basic categories of songs performed by the band. The first was a handful of covers of old dragon material — *The Time*, *Sunshine* and *Are You Old Enough* — songs performed with an obvious yawn by Hunter and, apart from *Sunshine*, the rest of the band included. These numbers were obviously thrown in to display some sort of affinity with the old days and to keep the young girls and boys down at the front happy. That's fine I guess but the way in which they were dealt was limp and hardly in keeping with the spirit of Hunter's old band. *Sunshine* had some nice sustaining piano runs but apart from that it was a pallid bloated bimp like the others.

The second category, and the most important as far as Hunter, his band, the audience and the record company (Polygram) are concerned, was his new set of original tunes. Now sad though it is to say, the shock which I had to overcome on the discovery that these songs were invariably good was nothing compared to the dissatisfaction I had with the actual portrayal of these songs, which countered the previous commendation. And countered it so severely that I doubt with this band and with his present state of musical mind at least whether Hunter's new songs will be successful on any level other than one which will serve as a suitable mausoleum for this country's middle class.

There is no denying the quality and bubbling tropical spark inherent in these new songs of Hunter's. It's just that (and this is no over simplification) their present construction is one of basically heavy rock leanings with only all too infrequent manifestations of the rhythmic salsa swing and funk undertones that the songs persistently allude to. Hunter needs, and if he's had it already then he may as well give up, a good and hearty dose of ethnic musics to spruce up his interest in the cool flame of swing with some hard knowledge. The perfect band for Hunter would be, if he could forsake the trashy glam image of his film clips for the real sensuality of first live presence, Kid Creole's red hot Coconuts with their ingrained sense of when to funk and when not to.

If the songs are still the bottom line then Hunter's going okay. If it's the way these songs are being treated (by his pompous bunch of Musicians Club types) then it's not so cool. Hunter sounds like he needs a rest before he's even begun. Here's the advice kid: screw the band and score some heat. Take a break and indulge in some real top cans, not the stuff those Grainstore types call funk.

Craig N. Pearce

LIVE

Mental As Anything,
The Particles,
The Big 5
Macquarie University
Sydney

Now I hadn't seen the Mentals for about six months and they have a new album in the charts and I've never seen the Particles (where have I been all this time?) And the Big 5 were reputedly a new ska band. Sydney is currently experiencing something of an epidemic of such bands. Oh well, that's reason enough to make the trip to Sydney's northern university.

I should have stayed at home. We queued for what seemed like an hour to get inside, another half an hour to get a drink, and then proceeded to get trampled by hundreds of long haired drunken surfies. A lecture at Macquarie University must be like a Midnight Oil gig at the Royal Antler. God, we've only had one week of warm weather and everyone looks like they've just got back from two years on Bali. Maybe they all have.

I must put aside my prejudices. Where's the band? Oh no, more sun bleached hair on stage, yes the Big 5. If you are one of those people who think the Allniters playing ska in Sydney is a bit incongruous you should see the Big 5. They leave the stage to nods and grunts of approval from the assembled throng.

But it's the Particles I'm interested in. Not so most other people it seems. There's a general exodus to the bar and I find some room up the front. As it turns out the Particles do well and the hippies come back and listen and dance in the end. It's a definite victory for the forces of good. The Particles impress me a lot. They've been around for a long time and it's my loss I haven't seen them before this. Their songs are full of melody and achieve a dynamic I would have thought impossible with a drum machine. Yes, no drummer. That could

People With Chairs
Up Their Noses
Jump Club
Melbourne

Despite criticisms of pretentiousness and references that the chairs were up certain other anatomical orifices your intrepid reporter deposited himself at the front of the dance floor to witness on your behalf the phenomenon of People With Chairs Up Their Noses.

Chairs Up Their Noses — the band's theme song — opened a lively set at a packed Jump Club (Little Heroes were headlining on a fair weather Saturday night.)

The audience immediately recognized that People With Chairs Up Their Noses are an avant garde intellectual band leading Australian Rock to a deeper appreciation of the basic philosophic concept of man's inhumanity to woman in a multicultural society.

Quickly the band (P.W.C.U.T.N.) blasted into *Wipe Out*, a bizarre epic of human endeavour, triumph and tribulation in the face of (overwhelming) adversity. The listener almost fails to notice black curly hair creeping from below bassist Mark Barry's blonde kitchen mop wig.

The third number for the night is the ever meaningful Presley cover (written by Messrs Giant, Baum and Kaye) *Edge of Reality*. Meaningfully, the feedback pierces our ear drums as saxophonist and lead vocalist David Feltser chants the esoteric mantra of 1950s rock: *Sex, Coca, Rock n Roll*.

P.W.C.U.T.N. are the most expressive and certainly the most original heavy metal west coast primitive funk band in Smith Street Collingwood. The percussion instruments include an electronic Synare 3, two pairs of bongos, high hat, snare, battered kero tin, empty bottles and the guitars are probably stolen. This is evidenced by the black flying wedge which appears to be cut down from a semi acoustic Suzuki twelve-string or possibly a 1952 Volkswagen.

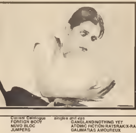
Guitarist Jim Shugg is somewhat out of place in the band. He seems to know which end of the guitar belongs where and apart from that he is about eight feet tall.

The band has close connections to the centre of high school intellectual creativity — the Film and Television Course at Melbourne State College. Drummer Jim White is a student at the venerated institute and colleague Althea Bartholamew is planning to make a video of the band for Countdown and Nightmoves.

Althea kindly explained that *Shakin All Over* was in fact a send up of hippies, punks and R&B. Sadly it was the band's encore and was the only song that received what appeared to be a normal musical treatment.

Unfortunately I can't see massive long term commercial success for the band. Although they deserve congratulations for an interesting concept and the courage to present it to audiences, humorous acts don't amuse at repeated performances — a joke is only funny the first time that it is told. But they are worth seeing at least once.

DAVID LANGSAM



SMASH AND GRAB

available in SA thru John Martins, Seeing Ears, Andromeda, Umbrella, Soul Train Record Factory, Island records, Muses, Sound Reaction and Ripple Records Norwood

In VIC thru Missing Link, Gaslight, Larrikin, Exposure, Readings. In NSW contact distributor Ian Page 357 1542.

Current Catalogue singles and eps
FOREIGN BODY GANGLAND/NOTHING YET
NUVO BLOC ATOMIC FICTION/RATSRAK/X-RAY
JUMPERS GALIMATIAS AMOUREUX
CURRENT CATALOGUE CASSETTES
DIE DANCING BEARS
CURRENT CATALOGUE LPs
LAUGHING CLOWNS THRONE OF BLOOD/REIGN OF TERROR
BODGIES SENSATIONAL
5MMM COMPILATION OF ADELAIDE BANDS

AVAILABLE SOON NUVO BLOC CASSETTE
ALSO AVAILABLE – RALPH AND AU GO-GO RELEASES

have been what confused the audience in the first place. Or it could have been the way they sang a song about a penguin and really meant it. Maybe I missed some deeper meaning or maybe they just went to the zoo one day and didn't like the look of the penguin pool.

Their lead singer was decked out in a splendid technicolour outfit she claimed to have made herself that afternoon as everything else was in the wash. Heaps of selfconfidence and a great voice make here fine front person. And the harmonies she worked with her guitarist were clear and folksy almost quite a pleasure to hear. And you can dance to a drum machine.

The Particles made my night. Mental as Anything undid it again. They may be new songs but it's the same old story. *The Nips are Getting Bigger* must be the theme song of every sporting club on the North Shore. The drunken hordes danced predictably wildly. I edged closer to the door. Greedy can still make me laugh at times but I find myself finishing his jokes before he does. At least his *Too Many Times*, their latest single, is a vast improvement on Martin's dire *If You Leave Me Can I Come Too*, but it's hardly enough to fire the imagination. The Mentals magic has worn out for me at last. Cult stardom I suppose.

Scott Matheson

ALL NITERS, NZPOP, SINGLES

Selina's, Sydney

Terry Page has certainly spent up big to make Selina's a good music venue. There's plenty of room to stand around, sit with a reasonable view or just plain dance. The Studio 54 lighting effects are more memorable for their expensiveness than any aesthetic qualities. Four BIG speakers blast out a good selection of danceable material between bands. Bar service is quick from sequined miniskirts. Also quick is the way the hole in your wallet expands. Once you're out the door for a breath of ocean air, a game in the electronic gallery or whatever, you have to pay to get back in. At least they relaxed the collar regulations.

First on were the delightfully infectious pop quartet, the Singles. They seemed a bit out of place on that large stage, which accentuated their main weakness – lack of stage presence. "Thank you. The next song's called ..." is the extent of the dialogue. And move! They spin about the stage like a 7" single on the turntable – with the power off. The songs though are good, strong pop. Melodies hook-ridden and occasionally ("Someone That I Knew", "Love of Loves") memorable. The Singles are so easy to appreciate unless you're insistent on progressive art or trendiness or both.

NZPOP took to the stage and burst into an energetic, sometimes blistering set. The dance floor should have been crowded. This band has a great sense of dynamics. The lead singer is a very dramatic performer which suits the music. He could easily double in Jimmy and the Boys (except for Iggy's wunnerful gymnastics). Most of the songs vary deftly in tempo and rhythm, often with crescending climaxes (repeat 5 times fast). The mix is good. Musicianship a cut above. They could do anything (commercially speaking) given the chance. The classical Split Enz phrasiology, the hard rockin' sound Mi-Sex had when they first arrived in Oz, and a few Swingeresque pop cliches, all shackled with a raging power that launts, charges and scores a bull's eye. No bull, they're tops.

The drummer maintains a solid yet understated beat and uses plenty of well placed cymbal effects. The bouncy-to-frantic bass player (who apparently comes up with most of the material) was either enjoying himself immensely or having great difficulties removing the sweat soaked fringe from his eyes. The lead guitarist drove the beat (and our feet) and occasionally let go with a scathing solo. Drifting over and through the rhythm was an organ used to its best advantage as a rhythm instrument. But the best songs, I thought, were when he changed to guitar and the band really rocked. Highlights were "The Hitz", "Jumping Out a Window" and "Love Comes to the Rescue". They did a good version of "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" but almost unforgivably didn't do "Shake Some Action". NZPOP start recording an album soon. I can't wait.

The Allniters were the headliners. They've built themselves quite a reputation around town. Obviously most people have been waiting for them tonight. And they play ska competently and fun lovingly. Another example of Oz rock's ever-increasing diversity.

If reggae is the blues of the 80's then ska is the bubblegum.

Peter Mudd

Paul Kelly

Heart and Soul

It's a lot to expect an inspired performance at 1pm before not many more than two dozen people. But while Paul Kelly and his pop'n'soul cronies didn't exactly deliver a gig to remember, they couldn't hide the brilliance they must exhibit in full flight.

The Dots have been around a fair amount of time, the latest period having been spent in Manila recording the follow up to their interesting but not too-successful debut album.

Paul Kelly's popularity in the premier state isn't astounding. I'd always associated them with the Carlton scene and, if I'm not wrong (what? again!), various cult figures having have moved through the Dots line-ups. The Falcons did the lab. *Only the Lonely Hearted*, although the production on that track was terrible. *Billy Baxter* got a fair bit of ok play but while it was VERY catchy it was lightweight stuff. Kelly's seemingly semi-legendary reputation in Melbourne has never really been related to commerciality. He has remained a fringe performer, highly regarded but without the appeal for Australia's too-small R'n'R industry to take the plunge. The mistakes that are made.

The Dots are a powerful line-up. Dual guitar attack (not the wimpy Thin Lizzy style) with Kelly's chunky chording filling the sound out even more, and a Mack Truck solid rhythm section that drives hard, cruises all the right times and rocks in the right directions. Which ways that? you say. Round in circles like all established artforms of course. With an unlimited number of tangents (see it's easy once it's explained, eh.)

Paul Kelly's tangent is one that intersects quite a few of my favourites.

Graham Parker, Chris Bailey, Dylan, Wreckless Eric — these flashed through my mind during the set. On reflection, it's a very Kelly-ish voice. Now the harmony vocals, they're "easy" drawling, flat parodying. That Mick'n'Keef refined (or defined, depending on how far back in history you want to go) sounds great and the Dots do it justice. I couldn't pick up too many lyrics but they seemed nicely balanced between sneers, smiles and heartaches.

Definitely a dance band. The guitars keep rockin' and with three of 'em, there's power to burn (or at least wear the soles off your shoes). Straight out rockers, R'n'B, hard-edged soul ballads.

Good stuff! Why haven't they taken off? Or is this incarnation of the Dots the one to do it? Give them a chance to convince you.

Peter Mudd

THE ANGELS · COLD CHISEL
MENTAL AS ANYTHING
DIRTY POOL
ICEHOUSE · MONDO ROCK
INXS · DIVINYLS
69A OXFORD ST. BONDI JUNCTION
P.O. BOX 196, WOOLLAHRA N.S.W. 2025
02·389 2100

ROADRUNNER

1981 Readers Poll

Australia

Group 1

2

3

Male vocalist

Female vocalist

Guitarist

Bass

Drums

Keyboards

Other instrument

Album

Single

Film

TV Show

Radio station

Live performance

Songwriter

Producer

New talent

Venue

Drink

Hero

Villain

Film clip

Saying

Cricketer

Worst band

Rest of The World

Group 1__________

2__________

3__________

Single__________

Album__________

[illegible]__________

Jumpers – pic Eric Algra

JUMPERS, FOREIGN BODY

Aberdeen Hotel, Melbourne

Good beat music from Adelaide has been a rare commodity in Melbourne recently. Scruffy white hopes Bad Poets came, saw and died without a whimper; perhaps they couldn't be blamed for not knowing that Banshees imitations and looking dull on stage went out in '78. The only other South Australian imports I've seen recently, Young Homebuyers, did nothing but restore faith in the efficacy of bad Costello imitations as a valium substitute.

The Jumpers are no more original, but they have glimmerings of potential beneath their bright naive snap and polish. They're operating in a well-worn style that matches third generation 'ska' rhythms with occasional attempts at a more resonant pop music. Considering the thinness of their resources the Jumpers do well to avoid monotony; noticeable bright moments were the chunky drive of *Iranian Reggae* and the insidious *South Of France*.

But all too often mildly interesting songs are subverted by limp playing. With no guitarist and an unremarkable bassist the drummer has to fight hard to maintain any rhythmic punch, and there's little else in the instrumentation to compensate. The constant bright wash of keyboards becomes irritating after a few songs and the occasional sax interludes never verge on the inventive. Compensation comes in the form of precise vocals and flashes of lyrical wit, but the Jumpers are still a long way from their presumed goals.

As for Foreign Body, the less said the better. They provide nothing that isn't embarrassingly cliché, setting out with attempts at good time boogie that are sabotaged by guitarists playing repetitive chords with a sound reminiscent of some dim garage band circa 1968 and a saxophonist who was simply intrusive when not playing mediocre solos.

The band's one shining light is bassist Natasha Koodrany who has a strong voice that lurks in a style somewhere between that of Joan Armatrading and a more conventional soul shouter. Things became rapidly worse when she abandoned the microphone and the sound degenerated into muted wine bar rock ignored by everyone but a hard-core following at the front of the stage. Natasha returned for a punchy rendition of 'Women Break Out', but by then any impetus had been well lost and Foreign Body's set ended as it had started: with little joy, less invention and plenty of dull exclusive self satisfaction.

Adrian Ryan

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

This month all new subscribers will receive a copy of the Tigers album, an NZ pop classic.

And, despite the fact that rising costs have necessitated the raising of our cover price to $1.00, subs still clock in at $15 for a year.

So don't delay – write today

Cheques/Money Orders made payable to Roadrunner
Box 90, Eastwood S.A 5063

Name __________

Address __________

__________ Postcode____

SINGLES

SINGLE OF THE MONTH

The Birthday Party Release the Bats (4AD)
Owwwh! BITE! The most fully realized thing they've ever done catapulting them clear of ANYONE else. The burundi tom tom beat is just the sort of heavy hammer that the Birthday Party needed. Sometimes in the past their lunges have been wide of the mark. But this one is almost straight at the jugular. Blood curdling screams and lupine howls from the throat of Nick Cave and crazed guitar scratching by Roland Howard and Mick Harvey and relentless growing beat from Phil Calvert (who out drums Adam's two single-handed) and Tracey Pew all add up to the aural treat of the moment. Indeed the best yowl around!

INXS Stay Young (Deluxe)
Slowed down quite a lot from the live version this drifts dangerously close to being lightweight. It certainly hasn't got anywhere near the power of Just Keep Walking or The Loved One. This strikes me as a pretty good album track – a bit of a grower but not a smash.

Numbers Jericho (Deluxe)
First offering from the four piece [illegible] pieces I'm afraid. It plods along rather ineffectually as Ann moans about how she can't understand what's happening to her. I can't really offer any advice I'm afraid.

Tigers Don't Wanna Go Home (EMI)
Impressive. A well written, well arranged and well played story song. A nice acoustic/electric guitar interplay kicks things off over a steady medium beat, an interplay that builds up in intensity throughout the song. Vocals are handled with aplomb and the lyrics are utterly believable. A classy debut.

The Church Too Fast For You/Tear It All Away (Parlophone double single)
The Church conjures up images in my mind of choirboys or English public schoolboys. That flash of decadence amid the purity of tone and naivety of expression. The musical setting for this young angst is a mid sixties transatlantic pop-rock hybrid. It's a winning combination of elements. Not quite tough yet certainly not wimpy either, a delicate balance that is the hallmark of great pop music. Watch the Church. They'll go far.

XL Capris Igloos (Axis)
Is this the official launch of the Eskimo Beat? Perhaps that should be Eskymobeat. Nothing much wrong with Todd Hunter's tidy production but the song is an uneasy mixture of churn, quirkiness, awkwardness and real plain silliness. I can never decide how seriously to take the XL Capris. This doesn't help my problem.

Go Betweens Your Turn My Turn (Missing Link)
An exercise in studied nervous dance music coming apart at the seams. In essence a primitive dirge, all feeling drained away. Mourn the dead. Perfect for the British Market.

Lorne Right The Teenage Confession (Radialchoice)
Trite and all the wrong sort of cutesy.

Toni Basil Nobody (Radialchoice)
Toni comes over strong & sassy on top of a pretty straight forward rock base and a few keyboards tossed in for flash. Not at all unpleasant.

Dugites Part of Me (Deluxe)
Jaunty tune masks the intent of the really rather good lyrics. Linda stretches her vocal chords and the rhythm section go very discreetly bananas behind that carnival keyboard. A tighter solo'd be great, but not bad at all.

Surfside Six The Sign (Phantom)
Not more (recycled) Birdman demo boys?

Mi Sex Missing Person (CBS)
Almost autobiographical?

Q-Feel Doctor On The Radio (Jive)
Possesses about as much depth as this page of paper with Bucks Fizz.

Lisa Edwards Centre Spread (Mushroom)
Ditto. Disco without the (necessary) funk.

Bill Wyman Si Si Je Suis Un Rock Star (A&M)
Brilliant.

The Kinks Better Things (Arista)
I dunno if this is even whether Ray and the boys have gone back to their original Shepherd's Bush basement. Still it's possessed of a rough melodic charm that is the band's trademark and should garner some exposure.

Machinations Average Inadequacy (Phantom)
This could have made its point a lot more effectively in half the time, but if you bother to struggle past the opening minute the end is quite rewarding. Electronic slurpings abound over a slow fed bass line that gives the song an endearing backbone. With a little more in the way of hard edged funk attack the Machinations could prove very interesting. At the moment there's a softness, a hint of Lab instead of Rob B. Worth a listen.

The Stockings Good Luck (Rough Diamond)
If a pop song doesn't grab you in the first 30 secs then usually it's doomed I reckon. This is definitely a pop song, but the grabby hook doesn't hit till about a third of the way through. And when it does it's not all that remarkable. There's nothing distinguishing about the at all really. The Stockings seem to be still in search of an identity.

Fast Cars Saturday's Girl (Method)
From song bits are jumbled together in a distressingly haphazard manner on this Sydney independent. Probably works better live and on the evidence of this they'd probably be worth a flutter.

Justin Kase Toys For Boys (EMI Custom)
It's psychedelic pop (as opposed to pop psychedelic). Definitely feminist leaning lyrics too! It's from Brisbane! There's even a line that sounds like Split Enz! (In a special way hey!) Great effects, strings and things, chools along bewilderingly good.

Herbie Armstrong Real Real Gone (Avatar)
Produced and written by Van Morrison it says on the cover – and it sure sounds that way. Whassamatter Van? Lost your voice?

Jo Broadbery & the Standouts Cut Out The Reel (Revenge)
No! No! Put it back in!

Denis O'Brien Breaking Into Another Day (RCA)
Adult contemporary. Yeeecch.

The Gordons Future Shock (Indep.)
The late departed John Doe would have gone into writhings over this. A brutal garage punk buzzsaw riff repeated to the point of overkill and neural damage (OK so it made me turn up the stereo). Emanating from across the Tasman so I'm told. But every city has sewer bands exactly like this (Sydney has more than usual) and the world would be a sadder if a little quieter place without them. Fantastic. I love it!

Belle Stars Hiawatha (Stiff)
Ex Bodysnatchers so I believe and there's still more than a hint of 2 [illegible] about [illegible] coming through [illegible] the [illegible] bobbing variety of sounds and singing. Play it twice and you see what I mean.

Vee B Ritz Rock (Powderworks)
Caribbean calling again with an exhortation to Let's rock let's rock n roll again. A bit on the lightweight side for a Sydney outfit, but almost makes it into the pop psychedelia class. That's as opposed to psychedelic pop which is a completely different kettle of fish.

Modern Eon Child's Play (Dindisc)
Not bad for a bunch of brooding Poms.

The Webb Brothers The Colonel Put The Lickin In the Chicken But Who Put The Roo In The Stew (RCA)
Indescribable.

The Bluebirds Only You Can Do It (CEO)
Someone told me these young lasses are the Carlton Football Club Cheersquad. Well how prophetic they were. If you're the one who ventures to the odd football club do you probably won't mind this. If you aren't, weirdo value only.

Vixen Time Out (Alternative)
OK I need the break.

Specials Ghost Town (2-Tone)
Absolutely brilliant. Haunting, evocative – the soundtrack for the U.K. riots.

Donald Robertson

STICK A BABEL
FISH
IN YOUR EAR, AND LISTEN

THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO
THE GALAXY. AVAILABLE NOW

ORIGINAL RECORDS POWDERWORKS THRU RCA

Rolling Stones
Tattoo You
(EMI)

Age might have wearied them slightly but you wouldn't be able to tell from *Tattoo You*. Whether you like what they do or not the Rolling Stones on this album show no signs of being ready to throw in the towel. It may get increasingly embarrassing to watch Mick Jagger throw his forty year-old body around on the TV screen but turn up the sound on the stereo and it's a different story. Anyway as long as Charlie Watts keeps on smiling it's O.K.

Tattoo You has two sides (like most single albums really). Side One is the up tempo side for parties or whatever. Side Two the slower side for later on at the same party. Single *Start Me Up* opens Side One which is appropriate I guess, followed by a ready set of familiar but never limp rock n' roll songs. Of course it's now part of the formula to include the obligatory Keith on vocals track, and his contribution is the highly chauvinistic *Little T & A* (don't be shocked madam I only encourages them). *Black Limousine* strips away the years; close your eyes and this straight blues piece could have come from any one of what seems like a hundred albums that the Stones have put out. There's nothing amazingly different on Side One at all and yet it is this side with the more instant appeal. Nor is there anything marvellous about the lyrics, in fact they're ludicrous but this doesn't seem to detract either. Since when did the Stones have to rely on good lyrics to sell an album?

The most interesting thing about Side Two apart from it being a change of mood is the fact that you can hear Jagger trying intelligently to use his voice throughout to maximum effect. *Worried About You* sees him rediscover the falsetto range that made *Emotional Rescue* a shock and this is used sparingly but effectively in other songs that follow. *Tops* is as good a vocal performance as you will have heard Jagger give. *Heaven* is the album's most experimental track with Jagger giving a vocal so wispy that it's almost not there. Don't let it be said that these guys aren't trying anymore.

Tattoo You probably won't ever be my favourite Stones album but it certainly adds a few favourites to the list, and is a healthy sign of life from a band that should have burned out years ago.

Adrian Miller

DEBBIE HARRY
Koo Koo
(Chrysalis)

An 'Alien' Giger cover doth not the stunning solo debut make but in this case it sure helps temper the disappointment. If ever an album were held in a dead even balance it's *Koo Koo*. Straight down the line – 50% good (but not awe inspiring) 50% decidedly so so. Debbie and pal Chris have been cooking up this precious beasty with Chic production team Rogers and Edwards for the past year or three. Uncooperative record company schmucks (Hey Marvin like those Chic guys are Black and Deb may not be a natural blonde, but ...) and the rigors of mega stardom may make life difficult but they don't quite excuse such a frustrating motley effort.

One helpful hint for getting the most out of this thing is simply PLAY IT LOUD. This puts a bit of necessary guts into an otherwise shallow almost limp mix. Only *Chrome* stands somewhat apart from this criticism with its brilliantly creamy congas churning keyboard section and hymnlike low putting it between *Atomic* and *Fade Away and Radiate* in the Blondie Hall of Fame.

As for the bottom end of the barrel *Inner City Spillover* takes the cake and breathes Limburger all over it. Harry and Stein have loitered on the mono-lyric edge before but this isn't even silly enough to be cute. Some reggae-backed rubbish about bricks falling on her head later winding up part of a road. My memory refuses to hold any more of it. Nuff said, forget it.

Back to the good bits for much needed relief. *Jump Jump* is a cut down funky number that twitches nicely and switches from dance-floor to Charleston school before your very ears. Next in line track-wise is *The Jam Was Moving*, the best of the Rogers Edwards songs. It reminds me of early Blondie stuff and that's quite a compliment to both composition and execution.

The only thing left on side one is another Rogers Edwards ditty ripped up in stuttering funk fashion that does not hang. Being 'hit by a big Mack truck' may be an alternative to the title predicament of *Surrender* (to the macho advance) but in context the whole thing sounds more trite than tastefully abrupt.

Backfired reverses into side two on another funk skateboard with Debbie giving "my man" the well-deserved hard word. It's somewhere between a 4 and a 7 on the judge's 10 point scale but reasonable radio fodder I guess. Things slip under again after the final 'dead' stop ending. *Now I know you know* is the closest poor Deb's come to Blossom Dearie, a sweet smiling helically controlled vocal with insipid MOR backing. It tries to get lively as a desperate finale but just ends up frizzing around in an aimless boogie. Not worth the attempt.

Under Arrest and *Oasis* suffer from the next guise but it only makes attempts at obvious atmosphere that start close but proceed blindly, a few O.K. bits surfacing as if by sheer chance. But then there's my favourite track, something successful and different stuck between the two. *Military Rap* throws together various Asian references, Patpong Road (Bangkok's centre of dubious dealings) tourists, military training and bent fox hunt horns. The result leaps past your ears thru your curiosity and straight to your toes. It's also the B side of the *Backfired* single, a deviant bonus for the unsuspecting 7" market.

Well that's it, Debbie's first outing on her own, well almost. I reckon if the cover had been the soundtrack it may not have looked as good or sold as many, but would have been closer to the full Harry/Stein potential.

Tyrone Flex

Joe Ely
Musta Notta Gotta Lotta
(MCA)
The Shakin' Pyramids
Skin 'Em Up
(Virgin/Cuba Libra)

History time again. Both Joe Ely and the Shakin' Pyramids are attempting to cook up something new from the bones of American beat, and neither come up with anything more substantial than you might expect.

This is Joe Ely's first studio album since his adoption by the Clash as the acceptable face of country honky tonk and predictably enough he's kicking it out with more force than usual in an attempt to catch the elusive crossover market. On the back cover photo he's even managed to look slightly like Joe Strummer posing in the lights of some desolate downtown street. Ely however has had the fortitude not to abandon his roots, and there's still a modicum of redneck ethnicity in 'Musta Notta Gotta Lotta's' grooves.

The title track is a screaming piece of neo-rockabilly that pays its respects to Jerry Lee Lewis who doesn't sit still in the process, steel guitar and saxes wail, Joe yells out some nonsense choruses and the heat carries over into the next track. *Dallas* picks up its melody from Robert Johnson's classic *Four Until Late* and rides along on an irresistible boogie riff – there's a possible Status Quo cover lurking here. The lyrics are redolent of the ruthless affluent new Texas: 'Dallas is a jungle / but Dallas gives a beautiful light ... Dallas is a woman that'll walk on you when you're down'.

Unfortunately the heat becomes rather feeble after the excellent opening salvos. There aren't any of the heartbreak Butch Hancock ballads that decorated Ely's earlier albums, and the windswept country feels of those records are replaced by enjoyably bland AOR rockers like *Wishin' For You* in the watered down southern mode that Delbert McClinton makes his bucks from, while the tributes to Buddy Holly and Elvis (*Rock Me My Baby* and *Good Rockin' Tonight*) provide good dance music and nothing more. *I Keep Getting Paid The Same* is a slice of soulful honky tonk that Waylon Jennings might like to sing but essentially this is an album of superb playing (accordionist Ponty Bone and steel picker Lloyd Maines are both in hot form) and tasteful grainy vocalising wrapped around insubstantial material.

An ocean away from Joe Ely in terms of style are the Shakin' Pyramids, Scots representatives of the *new* age of British rockabilly. This particular genre reached an apex of fashionability in mid-81 when you couldn't go near a jukebox or a radio in London without being assailed by hiccupping voices and echoed guitars.

The Pyramids' gimmick is that they're an all-acoustic outfit, apparently as much at home busking in the streets as pumping it out through a PA. *Skin 'Em Up* includes a couple of examples of their live attack with frantic strumming assisted by some Anglo blues harp from singer Davie Duncan, but the studio tracks are filled out by percussion, bass and some understated electric picking.

It's all mildly enjoyable but the Pyramids run up against the same problem that all rockabilly revivalists except the magnificent Cramps have had to face: the primary originals in the genre were so effective at their best that imitation becomes pointless. Presley and Gene Vincent sang this music with a transcendental passion that has rarely been equalled in any form of rock — like Shakespeare they said it all and denuded the field for their successors.

The same could be said of the great rockabilly instrumentalists and a further problem arises with songs. Most of the truly durable cat music classics were done to death years ago, though the Pyramids drag a few worthy obscurities out of the swamp — Eddie Cochran's *Tired 'N' Sleepy*, Webb Pierce's *Teenage Boogie* (once ripped off by Marc Bolan) and a minor gem in the shape of *Sixteen Chicks*, the provenance of which is unknown to this non-fanatic.

Interspersed with these are the Pyramids' originals, which occasionally provide some nice rockabilly reference points. *Let's Go* is reminiscent of primitive Yardbirds and *Take A Trip* brings back memories of the Flamin' Groovies' never-to-be-forgotten *Teenage Head* album. There's nothing here to equal the Stray Cats at their noisy best or the Polecats' audacious rendering of Bowie's *John I'm Only Dancing*, but even if they don't have the advantage of Dave Edmunds as producer the Shakin' Pyramids have delivered a promising, non abrasive debut. And they never make another album still you feel an overwhelming urge to dance all night to the sounds of Memphis in '56 translated to the streets of Glasgow in '81 get your hands on this record.

Adrian Ryan

SLOW CHILDREN

WHAT THE CRITICS HAD TO SAY...

"Unmistakably the best album released this year" an Astor employee

"A sure-fire hit a must for all AM/FM playlists" another Astor employee

"Quite simply the most original and dynamic group I've ever heard . an effervescent excursion through the diverse realms of new wave pop/rock must be heard to be believed .." a somewhat ambitious Astor employee

love it . . ." A friend of a friend of an Astor employee

"Even though I didn't actually have to buy the album, I still appreciate Slow Children for their talent and enormous artistic scope the boss' brother

'superb . . exquisite brilliant it spits bursts and explodes in a cacophony of guitars like a hot knife through butter unquestionably demands to be listened to" a typical rock journalist

". will be the biggest success story of 1981 . a jolt to the rock world's sensibilities" the Astor 'educated guess' Department

"Love the cover" the Astor Art Department

" . . . ." the 'Silent Majority' Department

SLOW CHILDREN

MANUFACTURED & DISTRIBUTED BY ASTOR

Give the gift of music

Devo
New Traditionalists
(WEA)

Devo Devo who's got the Devo. The plot thickens and the mass market is penetrated with gains all round. As much as this is not the bent-around corners sound these lads are capable of, it's an album of strong sentiment that *should* stick in the craw of cool fools, controllers and apathetics everywhere.

Straight in the cow. As much as it's irony to hail Devo as mainstream cool after all these years, the opening track puts it right where it should be. "Through Being Cool" continues the subversive slide away from dingy de-evolution. These are not merely songs of hopeless regression or degeneration. In fact both *Freedom of Choice* and *New Traditionalists* have punched home some of the most sobering warnings and thoughts towards change through choice that I've encountered this side of '77. Prick up your ears indeed!

Anyway, apart from the recent Ramones ditty "*The KKK Took my Baby Away*", "*Through Being Cool*" has some of the greatest anti-Klan lines to date.

Chase down Mr KKK, till no trace can be found, and if you live in a small town you might meet a dozen or two young alien types who step out, stand there to declare "We're through being cool."

A fire against fire anthem if ever I saw one. As a general complaint the music may be MOR (relatively for Devo) but it's the vehicle that'll get stern words encoded across to the thick soul boy masses where they're needed. Preaching to the converted is not the Devo way, well not anymore if it ever was.

One can listen to *New Traditionalists* a dozen times and get a little more out of each serving. Bits that stand out in this reviewer's mind at present include the two-edged sentiment behind "*Love Without Anger*", combining the obvious urging and alternative of "*Why fall in love when there's better things to do*". Bits of *Race of Doom* and *The Super Thing* have their prophetic/mystic angles with references in the latter like:

Hidden motivations buried in the past give us the strength to do the Super thing. (sounds Freemasonic to me, well maybe.)

Enough Said and *Jerkin' back and forth* get into economic politics of sorts with the usual Devo dheapy cliches like "The next thing I say to you will be true. The last thing I said was false" thrown in for effect. As a bonus for the first 5,000 happy purchasers there's also a free 7" disc of an old Allen Toussaint song "*Working in a Coalmine*" which would have made a great straight single.

Devo may not be Akron Bananas raving off in the obscure distance any more, but *New Traditionalists* aren't the soft sellout I initially took it for. Just maybe next time round they'll twist the de-evolution tag out the sick marketing schtick and slap the face of the stupid goose after taking the golden egg.

Tyrone Flex

Kraftwerk
Computerworld
(EMI)

and we're going to [illegible] the technology to [illegible] and the mechanics of how [illegible] communications medium so we can begin to start a new life style

M McLAREN

Kraftwerk, the soundworkers from Dusseldorf, give us a glimpse of the new technosound they are developing. The are Zeitgeist, the spirit of the time, the future.

Everyone uses technology, especially pop groups, but Kraftwerk takes it further; there is a total absence of heroics; the music is soft, layered, complex; the sound is elemental, machine-clean.

Faith in technology is the only true faith; there is no way back, no Luddite happy way. Embrace it now.

It only remains the future until it's accepted. Technology can get us out of the present, something we all want but most refuse to accept.

Machines are neutral, they are not good or bad — we can't say the same for people. Retrothinkers and Luddites won't like the record. Kraftwerk are mapping one route to the future.

Wolf Gestell

The Crocodiles
Looking At Ourselves
(Stunn)

Hmmmmmmm. How does one handle an immaculately executed album that has no obvious flaws except irrelevance. Be classy! Right. It reminds me of the Carpenters (before Karen discovered the American female stereotype) or Manhattan Transfer 50's style (without class).

On second thoughts let's be a little more tolerant. Like the twin vocals are quite impressive even if the lyrics are a little cliche (make this unashamedly second hand). And on production Crocodiles/M Chunn have done a solid slicker-than-slick job especially on the old grand piano — punchy, wonne them. Everything is very light and well played with moments verging on guts. The old 50's pie flavour makes for bouncy easy listening.

New Zealand has produced a rather bizarre range of talent, what with the inevitable Split Enz and more relevant (to this review) Oregon, and this is certainly another product of parallel (if not surpassing) technical quality, but I severely doubt its ability to turn heads and turn over units, let alone cultivate even low level artistic credibility (whatever it's worth).

Tyrone Flex

The Fabulaires
Apocalypso
(Rough Diamond)

This mini album is the end of a two year partnership that produced some of the best dance/party music ever heard on the pub circuit. Not really a summation because the Fabulaires have been much more than these six songs can illustrate, but this collection does give an indication of the talent and versatility of the band.

Side One bounces along through *The Remedy*, [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] with vocal by Jo Moore which [illegible] both songs period [illegible] *Way*. But in between is a soaring [illegible] *Ghost Rider* [illegible] but being [illegible] suffers from some muddy recording. *Too Bad* captures the energy and pure fun of the Fabs on stage and it's carried through into *Problem Of Mine*, vocal by Greg Champion and ever present well crafted back ups by Jo Moore and Jane Lewis. *I Knew This Would Happen* sounds like a good song but the sound is too fuzzy to appreciate it.

Featured on Apocalypso are John James Hackett, drums; Jo Moore and Jane Lewis, vocals; Mick Tsaidis, guitar; Wayne Burt, guitar and vocals; Greg Champion also guitar and vocals; and Ian McDonald, bass.

Altogether a pleasing and nostalgical collection, one that perhaps doesn't do justice to the Fabs as we knew and loved them but the appeal is wide and the [illegible] [illegible] limited [illegible] a fitting tribute.

Kate Menger

Kilburn & The Highroads
Handsome
(Astor)

Six years after the event the powers that be have finally decided to release Kilburn & The Highroads *Handsome* album in this country. Why should anyone be interested in this prehistoric piece of vinyl from this long extinct group of unknowns at this late stage? Well the main reason — probably the only reason is that the Kilburns featured as vocalist/co-writer one Ian Dury who has since managed to become slightly famous and in the process added a little beninness and fun to an oh so serious music scene. Davey Payne also made the journey from Kilburn to Blockhead and is featured here playing some enthralling sax though much more conventionally and nothing like the maniacal noises we have come to expect from him.

Handsome contains some tracks essential to any self respecting Dury collection, some of which could have been slotted into all or any of the three Blockhead albums released thus far, which says either that Dury had his act together early or else that he hasn't developed much since 1975. Either way, Dury lovers should seek out a copy and listen to *Father*, singalong *Fam's Meods* and *The Roadette Song*, or you could keep warm on a cold night to the sound of Davey Payne's sax solo in *Crippled With Nerves*. But be warned, three or four good songs doth not a great album make, and the overall impression left by this album is that Dury was a whole lot better once he discovered sex and drugs and rock n roll.

Comparing Dury's voice on this album to later day releases is rather akin to comparing an early Tom Waits album to the most recent stuff — somewhere back there in the hazy past they both started out with reasonable voices. On this album Dury even throws in a few passable impersonations which hint at other directions he might have gone in.

One final word — the Kilburns seemed to rely fairly heavily in their arrangements on piano player Roderick Melvin, who also co-wrote and sings on two tracks. Wonder whatever happened to him?

A dated album in many respects but not without its moments of compelling interest. File under Curios.

Adrian Miller

The Psychedelic Furs
Talk Talk Talk
(CBS)

The Furs have not done what was expected but they've certainly created what they should have — a shaggy sinewy beast, twined coat of colours, claws rough and grubby, teeth sharp and massive.

This is a wall of melody, maelstrom, guitarized but exceeding well-bent, as producer Steve Lillywhite has wanted to do. And the more I listen the more I notice, the more I think this mo[illegible] I agree, the more I move.

There is no *Sister Europe* here but a whole platter of well seasoned rock n roll. Tasty. It's Butler's words make even better sense than the first spin around of '80. One could say turning from political themes (ul a kite) to concentrate on relationships, sex and emotions, dealing more with one subject than stabbing out in several directions at once. And the sound dips into magnetically related regions, at times conveying a mild force impressions to a dig e [illegible]. Guitars, sax and keyboard slither into each other like amoeba with purpose, only momentarily becoming type-cast as heavy metalesque in the old A Cooper fashion. But the impression soon passes. The rhythm section are also full fledged rumblers, surfacing solo every now and then. Apart from dogmatic variations in listening tastes there is nothing to contradict an overall impression of strength of purpose and power in execution.

Mind you, I have not been an instant convert to *Talk Talk Talk*. For days after delivery it got hesitations and dubious comments, but as is often the way, a well presented video clip of *Pretty In Pink* (one of the stand-out numbers) prodded the lazy mind glands and got the nervous system curious. And the rest is history, as the cliche mongers are often heard (or read) to say. Apart from full-on songs, all of which deserve aural and lyric sheet attention, there are two neatly inserted instrumentals both as strong as any thing this sweaty 6 piece has to offer and yet unexpectedly short and sweet.

Forgive a few small strange indiscretions, they are but Butler's vocal emotions and emotives and besides which one of you could typecast the [illegible]?

At times Butler's voice may linger the anti Rotten essence but taking each delivery on its own merit this post punk brew is worth devouring. Zing to the truckloads of twists a[illegible] honesty devoted. This worthy provocateur manages to talk of diverse topics, situations without falling for the [illegible] dead and grim schtick or [illegible] spontaneous style.

With the Psychedelic Furs surviving from '77 [illegible] with albums like this, they'll be around for yea a while to come but that in no way excuses any further sustained ignorance. *Talk* may at first glance sound like idle chatter, but many a stroke of genius has been born in coffee lounge conversation.

Tyrone Flex

The Ruts
The Crack
(Virgin)

Freddie Aguilar
Freddie Aguilar
(RCA)

Slow Children
Slow Children
(Astor/Ensign)

The Ruts are not a reggae band after all. The listening of tracks such as *Babylon's Burning* and *Jah War* prove to be misleading, although the latter has that characteristic sort of offbeat.

What the Ruts are is a straightforward competent rock band. While there is nothing on the album I dislike, nor is there anything that particularly stands out, although this is not to say they are mediocre. Rather the sequence and internal arrangement of tracks is consistent and free from loose ends.

S U S on side one and *Jah War* on the other side are two of the more memorable cuts. The rest will stand up to replay and keep you entertained; you can probably put it on at a party without any qualms.

The Ruts seem to be free of pretension and may be worth watching.

Freddie Aguilar appears to be a Latin American whose music, while without fault, is fairly bland and devoid of any special categorizing. It's pure middle of the road and only really works as such. If the album had like the first track *Anak* been in Spanish or whatever (Portuguese?) I would probably like it more, as on that track I can appreciate his voice and some of the backing without cringing. Elsewhere, singing in English, he reduces the illusion of mystery which *Anak* contains to a disappointing blatancy. Recommended only for the incurably romantic.

I give Slow Children time to grow on me. An American five piece fronted by a female vocalist, they pursue a semi experimental formula which is not really new any more. Like the Cocteauesque cover, they are all too de[illegible].

Ignoring these observations and listening to the record, I remain unsure. A few years ago they would have moved much more quickly into acceptance — the significance of their name perhaps? — but these days they are likely to slide into oblivion.

Although the arrangements are sparse and disorderly and the vocalist can't really sing (except in a style handled better by the Flying Lizards) there is a germ of possibility in this band. *Home Life* on side two is a good tight song, and on the first side *Brazilian Magazines* and *Malicious* work pretty well. The other tracks swim into a general vagueness which, as I say, will need a few more playings yet. But I don't expect to find too much. They try hard but need a rethink.

Span

Music from the Film "Excalibur"
(Festival)

You may or may not have caught the movie and you may or may not have liked it if you did, but all celluloid aside the sound track was a great excuse for the romantic storm, stress and whispering that flows from Wagner's well fired genius. This is (quite sensibly) not that exact sound track but 7 similarly executed pieces, themes of which crop up throughout the movie. The sound is orchestrally glossy and vocally haunting but above all DYNAMIC — turn up for the softer bits and your late night lounge room will soon be in for a rude awakening.

The details: London Philharmonic and the New Philharmonia (and chorus) split the tracks about 50/50 and as conductors and people-on-chairs in semi-circles go, these turkeys have got their shit together, although some emaflarge purists would no doubt consider the whole exercise to be decidedly K Tel. If you've heard the true romantic music live, this concise collection would be worth the price of possession, and it's great music to write letters (or reviews) by.

Tyrone Flex

TOURING AUSTRALIA OCT 81

Gillan

12TH SUNDOWNER HOTEL, SYDNEY

13TH FAMILY INN, RYDALMERE, SYDNEY

14TH JAMISON INN, CANBERRA

15TH CLUB CHEVRON, MELBOURNE

16TH MANLY VALE, SYDNEY

17TH SELINAS, SYDNEY

20TH DOYALSON RSL, SYDNEY

21ST MELBOURNE

22ND THEBARTON TOWN HALL, ADELAIDE

THE VOICE OF DEEP PURPLE
HIS NEW ALBUM FUTURE SHOCK
FEATURING THE SINGLE : NEW ORLEANS

Virgin CBS

Debutantes

Sunnyboys
Sunnyboys
(Mushroom)

It's not often that I look forward to the release of debut albums especially those by Australian bands. I've seen so many potentially outstanding debuts fall victim of producing errors (the first Mental As Anything album would have been a killer but for Cameron Allen's gutless production) that have the effect of sapping the band's vibrancy and enthusiasm. With the Sunnyboys I can honestly say that this nightmare premonition never really occurred to me. It was overshadowed by too many positive factors. While Lobby Loyde is not the most subtle of producers he manages to develop a sound that perfectly complements the Sunnyboys persona. It works so well that any negative points are rendered superfluous or at the most nominal.

I have no hesitation in saying that this is the most complete debut album by an Australian band since The Sports' *Reckless*. Australian Crawl's *Boys Light Up* is utterly insignificant by comparison. This album manages to capture all the spark, feeling and enthusiasm that the Sunnyboys exhibit on stage. Loyde and engineer Col Freeman have maintained with remarkable success throughout the rough edged sound that has been the Sunnyboys trade mark from the beginning. My only disappointment is that Loyde has neglected Steve Harris' keyboard eventually on the three tracks he contributes to. Harris' rollercoaster style of playing very much to the fore when he was a member of The Passengers and The Flaming Hands has suffered in the mix down. From time to time it shines out only to submerge in a whirlpool of guitars.

The album comprises eleven tracks, most of which feature predominantly in the band's live set, and a reprise of *"I Can't Talk To You"*. Unfortunately the latter track is the only weak point on the record. It reveals (almost embarrassingly) singer guitarist Jeremy Oxley's penchant for imitating Iggy Pop right down to the choice of lyrics. Even if this was a parody, which I very much doubt, it's completely unwarranted. His own vocal delivery and inflections are so full of commitment that one can not help but feel completely overwhelmed by them. In fact it is the vocals that are at the core of the Sunnyboys appeal.

But it's more than just this. In essence it is the tragic vision of Jeremy Oxley and to a lesser extent his brother Peter (who contributes to a couple of the tracks). It is manifest in songs like 'Let You Go', 'My Only Friend's Gone' and the list goes on. They have an innate ability to communicate through their music the things that many of us share towards relationships and the confusion that goes with them. Making decisions be they wrong or right. Consequences. Shattered dreams. Hurt pain. The Sunnyboys write songs about life and everything that goes with it. As much as that may sound a cliché so from time to time are the lyrics. What saves them is the way they are sung. Jeremy has the strength of purpose and vocal ability to avoid any suggestion of mediocrity. As he sings 'Liar' we relive its agony in graphic detail:

so you see me and it's true
I'll never be the same
I didn't mean any harm
It was just a game ... you lied.

Not much on paper but this song almost brings tears to my eyes each time I play it. It's not only the vocals and lyrics but the overall musical collage. The guitars have and always will dominate the proceedings for the simple reason that Jeremy's guitar is but a mere extension of himself. What feeling he projects when singing he more than doubles in a guitar solo. They aren't pretentious self-indulgent solos but just another way of expressing his feelings in much the same fashion as Tom Verlaine. Nothing is lost in the studio environment and this, I guess, is what makes the album so enjoyable.

It would be hard to deny that the Kinks have been a great influence on the Sunnyboys (they even dress the same way!). It's there in just about every song. From the stop start rhythms to Richard Burgman's faultless rhythm guitar playing to Bil Bilson's relentless drumming. Even the back up harmonies are reminiscent of the early Kinks. Ray Davies wouldn't hesitate to stamp his seal of approval on the cover. I've no doubt about it. This is not to suggest that the Sunnyboys are overtly derivative, rather they have adopted a very credible style that suits their needs and they walk away with reputation untarnished.

All I can say is: Get a copy of your own and treasure it while you're young.

David Pestorius

Little Heroes
Little Heroes
(Grant)

Lyrical guitar meets steady but slightly unimaginative drummer meets pop keyboards meets workmanlike bass meets unique vocalist with better than average lyrics and what you have is the *Little Heroes*. This band could well be the next big thing but this album, the band's first, is by no means sensational, yet nor is it a dismal failure. What we have here is a very safe album. An album that sounds like a collection of singles. There are ten songs on the LP and they follow each other without any attempt to go beyond the formula of bright pop music. On the other hand what *Little Heroes* actually do they do very well and there are several near perfect tracks on this record.

Roger Hart has just the right type of vocal to give even the most mundane tunes an edge, and John Taylor, who plays bass, comes up with harmonies that truly complement Hart's vocals. David Crosbie on keyboards gives each song a circus feel every time the late great middle eight comes up. It isn't really any wonder that the better radio stations are playing this album continually.

The album begins with *For a Bleeding Heart*:

If the man next to you
Just can't keep up
It was meant that way
So you're not going to start looking for excuses
So stop staring at the moon
And never never never never never cry at night
There's no such thing as needing you
Everything is just one big fight
So stay away from the mirror
Never look in the mirror
The bleeding heart lies there

This song is pure sensitivity and it sets the tone for the remainder of side one, which is in a gentle a scenario for a bleeding heart out to have some fun, even though life doesn't always accommodate such a desire.

Side two is more concerned with boy-girl situations, apart from the excellent *Coming Home*, which makes *For a Bleeding Heart* sound quite wimpy indeed. *Pretty Shadow* swings along and is by far the album's most decidedly danceable song. And Roger Hart's voice never lets the listener rest:

I'm going out with a stranger or someone like that
There's nothing really stranger than someone like that
She's a shadow, never fades away
Shadows always got nothing to say
I'm going out with a stranger or someone like that

She Says is as brisk as what has come before. Keyboards propel this song as they do on *That's Me*, which features some fine sustained guitar as Roger Hart pictures himself in a bar trying to appeal to a girl and feeling quite sheepish about the whole thing:

Who's that standing by the bar over there
Staring at the girl with the long blond hair
She's got something everybody likes
Whose smiling, whose trying to look nice
I know that's me, reflected in your eyes

Coming Home concludes the album and is Roger Hart's personal favourite. Of all the songs it is this one which really should be getting the air-play. At times it expresses both fatigue and jubilation:

There's a cat in the alley crying out loud
And the early morning workers are moving in black shrouds
The dawn turns velvet into calico
And the world seems like that's the end of the show
And I'm coming home again

Little Heroes will be touring Eastern Australia in spring and then they'll be supporting Adam and the Ants across Australia. By the time their next LP is available they will have no doubt matured and become more adventurous. But until then this self titled album will serve the purpose of introduction and provide the listener the opportunity to become acquainted with the not unpleasant sound of *Little Heroes*.

Michael Mullane

Sunny Boys
Roger Hart/Little Heroes
Paul Northam & Campbell Laird MEO 245

All pix Eric Algra

Meo 245
Screen Memory
(Mushroom)

This is not one of those albums that produces rave reactions on first or second listen but once you've spun it for the fourth or fifth time it really begins to get a grip on you. Some songs are more immediate than others, of course. 'Jewels' springs to mind as being a very quick attention getter. Most of the tracks demand interest which, once given, is ultimately repaid with stabs on top. This is an excellent album which showcases a very well developed band with a lot to offer and a well-defined direction.

Meo 245 and producer Peter Dawkins have come up with a great overall sound in which every player makes his presence felt without ever tending to dominate the whole. Campbell Laird's drumming is simple without being moronic. He does not go in for extended rolls or technically impressive displays of the percussionist's art. He provides a solid basis and uses good taste in his playing to accent and complement. His rhythm section partner Mark Kellett plays forceful and insistent bass with lots of style. The bass sound is very well defined in the mix, often coming to the fore in alliance with the kick.

The keyboards of Paul Brickhill carry most of the melody duty. Paul Northam's guitar playing reminds me very much of the way Ivo Davies uses guitar. Much of his rhythm playing consists of dampened chords played eight to the bar. Much use is made of slow descending riffs and what solos there are serve to move and change direction, not to display the ability of the soloist. I have to disagree with those who say that this is a keyboard dominated album. Although it's true that the keys are heard more than the guitar, they never dominate. Paul Brickhill's are there, but they have a well defined part in every song and are never used excessively. With the album the accent throughout is on sparse tasteful simplicity and that is a deceptively hard thing to achieve.

Although the vocal range is limited and stays a little close to monotone at times, Meo 245 use what vocal ability they have very well. The overall effect is wistful and evocative of some sort of inner desolation, although it's occasionally droll. The highlights are many: 'Jewel', a beaty infectious song with a good hookline; the chorus of *'Burning Bridges'* and *'Promises'*; the end passage of 'Closing In'; the nicely constructed beginning of *'Will He Ever'*. I could go on.

This is a quality album from an Australian band that deserves any success this laudable effort brings it. The music is interesting and stimulating without being over-intellectualised or overbearing. Let's hope this is the forerunner of many fine albums from Meo-245.

Stan Coulter

The Cramps
Psychedelic Jungle
(Illegal)

The Cramps have respect for the one lunged dead. They have no young to eat and they can't find their minds.

With such spirit who needs a mind.

The Cramps' album *Songs The Lord Taught Us* is perhaps what would have happened if the people who came up with rockabilly had been taking acid instead of speed (Rocky Burnette would probably have three arms).

Songs The Lord Taught Us (them) is one of the most raucous demonic moes of the twisted that can be found. From Link Wray (bless his lung) to The Sonics' *Strychnine* to J. Burnette and Co's *Tear It Up* to *Fever* and then to the sheer manic lunacy of The Cramps' originals. It is fearful stuff matched apparently by their live performances.

The Cramps at that time were Poison Ivy Rorschach (she of the green eyes and voodoo guitar), Nick Knox (Drums), Bryan Gregory (guitar) and Lux Interior, the type of rock'n'roll singer everyone encourages their little sister to go out with. Lux Interior stands a good deal over six feet tall and, between cutting himself with sharp objects, swallowing microphones and behaving in a manner generally accepted in one who gives not a fuck (about anything), sings with a conviction, viciousness and reverence that inspires fear, tension and ultimately pure joy.

Songs The Lord Taught Us takes rockabilly into the old movie-houses (they say) and on to T.V. ads (consider the classic grate g[illegible] anything that [illegible] cate. They [illegible] freaked-out s[illegible] [illegible] sold as psyched[illegible] Which [illegible] to the [illegible] *Psychedelic Jungle*.

But first rhythm guitarist, the human skull, [illegible] of the two or three lone [illegible] Bryan Gregory, who [illegible] of The Cramps. Gregory [illegible] too long since amidst rumours of death, [illegible] etc. To be replaced by a coup[illegible] of potential Cramps. The final choice was Congo Powers a.k.a. Kid Congo who'd been playing for a good year or less and wasn't very old.

The right man for the job.

Gregory left The Cramps after 3 or 4 years which I'd seen the band famous before they could only play the release of a live track E.P. *Gravest Hits* and also *Songs The Lord Taught Us* (Produced by Alex Chilton formerly of the Box Tops and Big Star).

So The Cramps toured with Kid Congo and then produced their own *Psychedelic Jungle*. My first impression was that they'd strolled through the *Pebbles* collection and used what they liked. It still is. But the album is completed with a consistence and verve that few original *Pebbles* artists ever stayed sane (?) enough to complete.

Your parents won't be half as scared by this as they would be by the very dangerous *Songs The Lord Taught Us*. But take my word for it they'll still lock you out of the house.

The album begins with *Green Fuz* (originally by Randy Alvey and Green Fuz). It's not a patch on the original (that probably had a bass player).

Look just consider an album whose songs line up: *Green Fuz, Goo Goo Muck, Rockin Bones, Voodoo Idol, Primitive, Caveman, The Crusher, Don't Eat Stuff off the Sidewalk, Can't Find My Mind, Jungle Hop, The Natives Are Restless, Under the Wires, Beautiful Gardens* and *The Green Door*.

Yup you're getting the idea. They weren't all Cramps originals to begin with but they are now. To be obvious they've been Cramped.

This album is bursting at the seams with the heaviest voodoo rockabilly rhythms. It grinds, crushes, attacks and rears its massive oversized head then smashes it on anything with a psychopathic joy.

While I complain that some of it is a little too slow to carry the weight, The Cramps unleash *The Crusher*. Lux Interior's throat is a weapon of scary proportion. Growl? He should be President. Khomeini would still be in Rome. It is backed by a sensual anal twelve [illegible] I've l[illegible]

[illegible] away from it [illegible] sidewalk? What [illegible]

[illegible] the advice
[illegible] the sidewalk
You [illegible]
So do [illegible]
No [illegible] sidewalk
No mat[illegible] good [illegible] looks
You better go by the book
Leave there
Don't you dare
Eat stuff off the sidewalk

Simple one-drum rhythm and amateurish (but what feeling) guitar with thin continuous feedback in the rear makes for apocalyptic listening.

You might have scraped yourself off the wall(s) by the time *Can't Find My Mind's* demeanour has ceased just to be shaken, rattled, enchanted and slammed right back there again by *Jungle Hop*. That classic R'n'R Bo Diddley rhythm gets positively loved with reverential noise.

I'm wondering about this chap Knox. One reviewer suggested that for three years he's sounded as if he'd picked up the sticks for the first time at 3:30 the previous afternoon. This could be the truth, but when it's EFFECT you're after (and that, folks, is The Cramps) then who cares. The Cramps (they say) don't.

The boss has been complaining about my behaviour of late. Too much listening to The Cramps he says. Going mad, he says. But what the Hell, back to side one again. This stuff is good vicious fun.

John Dee

The Passage
For All And None
(Virgin)

The Passage hail from Manchester and comprise of Joey McKechnie, Andrew Wilson and Dick Witts. Mr Witts, as the sparse cover notes reveal, contributes music, texts and treatments. I know not what the other members play.

Predominating the recording are elements of swishing, seething synthesizer overlaid with monotone vocals that teasingly break into song on some instances. Lyrics are consistent in their political provocation, displaying sombre overtones in surprisingly rich imagery. Even the album's title *For All And None* is a terse referral to the twisted and dispir[illegible] h[illegible] a collect[illegible]

Side [illegible] *Dark Times* [illegible] ment [illegible] ludes of [illegible] records [illegible] wet look [illegible] McCawde[illegible] ling [illegible] pleasant [illegible] we're keeping [illegible] lucidity without [illegible] Party Line is indeed [illegible] Gum look like [illegible] they are.

From one dal[illegible] into yet another [illegible] *A Man*[illegible] observation on the den[illegible] vented) lures of the capital city, a city [illegible] drawing boards (dictating taste) and [illegible] outlets rather than factories. "Oh everybody moves there to make their careers. It sucks up ambition, it eats up ideas. It feeds them illusion and power and greed, their heads grow fat full of conceit, they're too big to leave now, they've admitted too late it's an abattoir, s lon don." Cinematic sweeps of synthesizer flush out these factual words, achieving the cold excitement of the people's race.

A haiku like piece *The Shadows* is enhanced by guest vocalist Teresa Shaw. Syndrums and synthesizer pepper the mood while Shaw's ethereal voice hovers over the landscape. The use of acoustic guitar adds an unexpected tinge to *Dr The Bastinado*. Distinctively the vocals take on a more naive quality (to match our own) before hitting back with the punch line: "It's only done to keep us free. It shapes our society. It safeguards you, takes care of me. Let's have more civic therapy." A parable of the human race lost on a back road (the system) while on a journey to the mythical orchard (material happiness) is mooted in *The Great Refusal*, the closing track: "The people made you, all the voices inside you, sing out for the great refusal".

With the completion of *For All And None* The Passage have created a musical manifesto on the ills of Britain (and beyond), a necessary album by and for youth. The warnings are there but it is by no means doomsday. If comparisons are your forte, then some of the songs on flow a la *The Man Who Sold The World* would come close to the material here. Observations and analysis of this calibre are certainly rare in rock'n'roll; fraternization with such an article is highly recommended.

Toby Cluechaz

FM 2MMM

"Because your ears have brains"

STEREO 105 FM

Com Sat Angels
Sleep No More
(Polygram)

In my article on this band I mentioned going to the studio while this album was being recorded. I said I was hopeful of it being a great success. Well, it's now been released in England and the promise has borne fruit.

Sleep No More is a definite progression from the first LP; the record is more unified in style and overall sound. It also in no way attempts to repeat the formulas of *Waiting for a Miracle*. The only thing I see as a loss is the paring away of vocal counter lines and harmonies. On last year's album they worked brilliantly where they were used. Here there are one or two songs which, despite what else might be attractive about them, are crying out for such treatment.

That said, the rest is more or less plain sailing. This band has produced a record which will repay close attention for a long time, both for its musicality and its conviction. Here the drums and bass have weight & depth, with total integration of bass patterns and drum patterns showing great thoughtfulness and invention in their execution. The guitar playing is fierce and cutting but held back often in the mix to become a part of a whole rather than a solo voice. The keyboard playing is perhaps some of the most interesting stuff on the record because it's so subtle and often so hard to define. On some tracks it's there in the mix but not easy to isolate. Its elusive quality is one of the main attractions, at least to me.

I'm not going to do a track-by-track analysis; that's rather pointless at this stage. A few mentions will suffice. Firstly, the only real dull track and the one which closes side 1, *Dark Parade*. It exhibits a few of the dangers [illegible] too far as they are from good [illegible] it is possible in this approach [illegible] vaguely defined lyric matter, an over-reliance on atmosphere for its own sake and a meandering, a loss of musical direction over what is after all quite a long, slow track. Too many climaxes which just lead to another quiet passage and so on. The riff-patterns which so often distinguish the Com Sat's songs are here pretty threadbare and the guitar solo doesn't really go. To point up the difference, a listen to the last track on side 2, *Our Secret*, is a good idea. At about the same tempo, this song has a haunting guitar line against droning, insistent bass and drums, and the vocal line is sparse but very strong, with a truly memorable chorus aided by some distinctive keyboard chords.

Another track which illustrates just how far the Com Sats have come since their first LP is the title track, *Sleep No More*, which is again sparse, almost ethereal, with a quick twin drum beat. It's almost a glimpse of what Roxy Music might have been like if Eno had made records with them again at about the *Another Green World* period. The whole thing shimmers on keyboards alone, with voice and drums weaving through them at a rate of knots.

Other notable things: the kicking bass line to *Be Brave*, the crashing guitar on the opener *The Eye Dance*, the words and the whole mood of *Restless* and *Light Years*, two intense, gently played songs, the whole of *Diagram* from the opening modulation of tone on the synthesiser to the savagery of the instruments under the chorus.

That's it. I think it's probably going to end up some time or other seen as a great LP. I'll be surprised if there are many as good as it released this year. But that's only an opinion. The rest's up to you. Give it a chance and see what you think.

Keith Shadwick

Slade
We'll Bring The House Down
(RCA/Victor)

If anyone ever doubted that there was a heavy metal revival, this surely confirms it. Slade aren't really 100% metal in my book, but they are close enough to be able to cash in on the re-emergence of that genre.

There are no cover notes so I can't say when this offering was recorded or even who is in the band apart from Noddy Holder and bass player Jimmy Lea. My mate Lenny suggested, somewhat uncharitably, that the album consists of tracks that didn't make it onto an early seventies album. That could be true of course. The style is little different from the Slade I had a fond spot for way back when I saw them get shitted on by Linda Lane at the Wayville showgrounds.

This is fast music to dance to. Slade were and are a good time lighthearted rock n roll band. Most of these tracks are twelve bar, straight to the point. It's pretty hard to say much more than that. I for one like it. It's preferable to the efforts of many of the heavy metal bands as far as I'm concerned. At least there are no long, long lead breaks and no drum solos. Noddy is still punishing his throat in his old style and doing a good job of it. It's a bit hard to see Slade making a comeback, but this is a good album for what it is. Get down and get with it.

Stan Coulter

Rose Tattoo
Assault and Battery
(EMI) APLP 049

From what we hear from England and Europe, it seems the TATS are about to become our latest Heavy Heroes, following in the footsteps of AC/DC. The TATS are presently going down very well with crowds of headbangers who like it hard, fast and very, very loud.

The TATS are probably the only band I've ever seen who employ a roadie to scrape human remains off the walls and ceilings of the gigs they play. They are also the only maniacs in the world who would insist on using a minimum triple four-way if asked to play at a lounge-room party. The last time I saw them I didn't go out for a week afterwards in case I got caught unawares by a low flying jumbo jet. Anyway, just stick the word "guts" in front of the title of the album and you'll get the idea.

No TATS fan is going to be disappointed with this little lot. Well produced by Vanda and Young at Albert Studios, it's a study in unrelenting pace and aggression. It's rude, crude macho rock at its unrepentant best (or worst, according to your own sensitivities, dear reader). I can't really see that there's much more to say. If you've ever heard (or heard of) the TATS you must surely know what to expect. Well, you've got it. I am inclined to think that this album probably won't sell well here in Australia but is just as likely to move heaps in Europe and the U.K. There's something about the Australian critical attitude to music like this that is akin to the ostrich with its head in the sand. The only problem is that while our trendy opinion makers are looking the other way, Angry Anderson, Angus Young and millions of snotty nosed little ruffians who wouldn't know the difference between Ultravox and Talking Heads have crept up behind them and kicked shit. And enjoyed themselves doing it.

Stan Coulter

Hazel O'Connor
Sons and Lovers
(Liberation Records thru EMI)

Take note all those who would aspire to a position of respect in the heart of the typical record buying public, this is not the way to go about it. Ms O'Connor has nothing new to offer the talented ranks of women already operating successfully (both artistically and commercially) in England at present. In fact she's a pretty poor synthesis of some fairly obvious influences, mainly Siouxsie Sioux filtered down through the mediocre Toyah Wilcox.

Pointless posturing, unoriginal material, recycled old tunes, folk songs (*Danny Boy*), yet ANOTHER song called *Time* and the services of a big name producer (Nigel Gray) does not a convincing album make. I suggest Hazel sacks her band, sticks to acting and leaves the music to those she tries to emulate.

Ruthven Martinus

The Radiators
Up for Grabs
(Powderworks Records)

The Radiators new album is a professionally produced, impressively packaged collection of new sound pop songs of varying degrees of worth. Most of the album is good up-tempo, eminently danceable material that features some interesting and enjoyable sounds emanating from various sources. There is a lovely glissando right at the beginning of the title track which brings the bass and drums into the album in magnificent style. The first three chords of *Nothing's Changed* are great, featuring a beautifully thick metallic guitar sound with inimitable Stratocaster origins. Little touches like these jump out all over the album. The keyboard sounds are well varied and provide many moments of interest. Vocals are a little weak in places and the bass drum is somewhat flat here and there, but these are minor flaws in an otherwise impressive sound.

The songs themselves are generally quite good, although the lyrics leave a bit to be desired at times and nowhere more so than in the first two tracks. *Up For Grabs* and *Room Full of Diamonds* both feature good melody lines and hooks, but are somewhat inane lyrically. Then again, who said that pop songs have to mean anything? *Nothing's Changed* is a great improvement. The lyrics are a lot more to the point, they provide ideas, express understandable sentiments and follow each other in logical sequence. I would've thought this track was an obvious single, but the way singles get extracted from albums is a constant source of amazement to me. My favourites never come in first. That helps explain why I don't follow the horses.

It Wasn't Me reminds me of XTC to a certain degree and features some nice shared bass/lead lines. That's usually a good tactic the Beatles used to use it to great effect. *Restless* is a pleasant song with a good chorus line. *Something Wrong* and *Automatic*, the opening tracks on Side Two, serve to strengthen my impression that someone in the band has been listening to XTC. The similarities are not pronounced but noticeable. *Automatic* is interesting if somewhat disjointed, but that could be a conscious play on the title. *Bustin Out* starts with a great little vocal bit that has a nice ring and features an excellent dual guitar solo. *I Go To Pieces* is very enjoyable, especially the robotic vocals in the chorus. *Sex* is a fairly unexceptional ditty and the finisher *Out of It* sounds like it would be a good live song, but it's not one of the album's high points.

In summary this is a good if flawed album. The melody lines are generally strong and the chorus hooky. The production job turned in deserves a pat on the back, as does the cover design. All in all a professional effort that has many pleasing moments. With more maturity in their songwriting the Radiators could become a force in the market place. This is a step in that direction.

Stan Coulter

Tygers of Pan-Tang
Spellbound
(MCA)

Oh boy! Here we go! A new combination Deep Purple/Uriah Heep/Van Halen! Complete with an Ian Gillan soundalike and very Van Halen sounding guitarist, the Tygers of Pan Tang are vintage heavy metal! This is the real thing, I tell you!

It's all there, pounding away track after track until the mood piece is reached. Then the pace slows and everything gets introspective until the big build up, complete with pyrotechnical guitar droning up the speakers with blistering bursts of blatantly boring bullshit. None of the saving graces of *Child in Time* or *Stairway to Heaven* either.

No, you guessed it, this one doesn't really do much for me. It is at least well produced though. The sound is nice 'n' pampy and gutsy. However this is just so old fashioned it's ridiculous. It hasn't even got the saving grace of being twelve bar or of being simple and straightforward. Definitely not to be taken seriously unless [illegible] or [illegible] I'd better not say that. Someone is sure to like this album, but it's not me.

Stan Coulter

Tenpole Tudor
Tenpole Tudor
(Stiff)

Concrete
999
(Liberation)

It's interesting to listen to a few old punks and see what they're up to these days. I hadn't heard 999 since I bought their first album 3½ years ago. Check these photos. Dear me, they've aged, but then I suppose we all have. Unlike 999, this is Eddie Tenpole's first real shot at stardom, but he has been in the wings for quite a while now. You may remember him as the deranged usher in the *Great Rock and Roll Swindle*. He made quite a magnificent fool of himself in that movie and now he's up to his old tricks again. All he's done is exchange his tray of jaffas and orange cordials for a bit of Sir Francis Drake get up.

And the record? Well it sounds like the Clash singing drinking songs. One in particular, *Wunderbar*, could translate extraordinarily well to a Bavarian beer keller. Every song has one of those big singalong choruses, putting them somewhere between Sham 69's *Hurry Up Harry* and the *Drinking Song* from the Student Prince. Stiff Records probably see it as their shot at the Adam Ant stakes. I see it as great fun if you're pissed, but a bit dull if you're not.

999 on the other hand are plotting an entirely different course. A bit of social comment, a front cover photo taken under a freeway flyover (they did take their name from a Clash song after all) and a fair dose of rather traditional rock and roll. They've been courting the American market for some time now, with what success I wouldn't know. Their records don't appear in the charts, but then someone keeps paying to put them out so they must sell the odd copy here and there. Listen to them and it's easy to see why they're concentrating on the U.S. I tend to think 999 and the early London punk scene were uneasy bedfellows. Now they've climbed off the band wagon a bit they can feel a bit more at ease. The music doesn't sound as good now as it did way back when, but it's probably a little more true to them. They cover *Fortune Teller* via the Rolling Stones and that's a fair indication of where they're coming from: an acceptable face of English new wave for the American FM audience.

Still it turned out better than I'd first thought. A few songs are actually quite good. *Mercy Mercy* is nice and poppy and *Silent Anger* is the first post English riots song I've heard. All the same, there's a heap of far more inspiring albums around to spend your money on. And as for Tenpole Tudor, buy the *Swords of a Thousand Men* single and skip the album unless you run lots of parties.

Scott Matheson

Sniff 'n' The Tears

Love/Action
(EMI)

It took me ages to work out just what I was reminded of when I listened to this set of songs. There was a close parallel there. I was sure but it just wouldn't surface.

I could hear a little bit of Springsteen in the chord progressions — nowhere near as majestic of course, just a ghostly echo – and a bit of Seeger in some of the arrangements. But that wasn't it. It was beginning to really get to me until I heard "Year of the Cat" suddenly run through my brain. That's it! Really, the resemblance to Al Stewart is very very close. Paul Roberts's voice is very similar in tone and quality, and even his inflections and vocal mannerisms are much the same.

The songs, too, are similar. There is the ever-present acoustic guitar coming through strongly over a strong drum, bass and keyboard mix. They are well crafted, well arranged songs [illegible]. The lyrics are generally fairly inconsequential, but the overall effect is quite pleasant.

Opening track "The Driving Beat" is a throwaway dance song about the joys of bopping. It rolls along pleasantly enough. The next two tracks are very strong, blessed as they are with chorus both melodic and powerful in a restrained way. The level drops a little for Track Four, but lifts again with Side One's closer "Without Love". This one has lots of appeal provided by a good beat and a very strong keyboard arrangement.

Side Two proceeds along much the same lines. "Don't Frighten Me", the third track, is really a very good song. The syncopated bass riff is used to very good effect and the keyboard sounds are excellent. This leads into another strong track called "Shame". Both the melody and the drums have a lot of appeal. The guitar solo is a little bewildering but it serves as only a minor distraction from what is otherwise an interesting effort.

This is a very easy album to listen to and a lot of the tracks deserve a deal of respect for the way they are arranged and the high standard of melody and chorus lines. It is certainly not heavyweight material and is not a selection to be enshrined with the greats, but [illegible] one. If they appeal, buy the album. I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

Stan Coulter

John Cooper Clarke

Me and my Big Mouth
(CBS)

John Cooper Clarke – humorist, poet, social commentator and all round good guy has produced a very erstwhile record. Musically and lyrically this album provides the listener with entertainment plus.

Music on Me and My Big Mouth is provided by THE INVISIBLE GIRLS who are a somewhat combination of Martin Hannett, Steve Hopkins, Stephanie Formula, Pete Shelly, Vini Reilly and a host of others. THE INVISIBLE GIRLS play with Cooper Clarke throughout's de one and it is clear that J.C.C. and THE GIRLS have a wonderful relationship.

I Married a Monster from Outer Space starts off the album and is indicative of this poet's style and sense of humour as well as the fine musicianship of THE INVISIBLE GIRLS. Next up is *I Don't Want To be Nice* which features clever guitar working in perfect unison with Cooper Clarke as he details the situation of himself being cornered by a person who the poet finds eminently resistible. *Valley of the Lost Women* is a tenderly delivered surreal ballad that refers to the cosmetic industry and the prickly heat of ice. *Thirty Six Hours* pictures with a savage wit life in prison. *The It Man* is a Cooper Clarke character both stupid and pitiful.

Underneath that yellow shirt
Beats a heart of solid dirt
Most disgusting man on earth
Baby – it's the it man

The first four tracks on Side Two have Cooper Clarke reading live. The audience warm to him on these four songs which are indeed very funny.

People ment on murder the moment you arrive
I'd consider killing you if I thought you were alive
You've got this slippery quality
It makes me think of phlegm
And your dual personality – I hate both of them

Twat

On these four songs he shows himself to be a poet thoroughly enjoying and in command of his art. The album concludes with Cooper Clarke reading the classic *Beasley Street* to the sound of THE INVISIBLE GIRLS, and there is nothing to stop you playing this compilation album over and over simply for the reason that it's brilliant. Listen to it — you won't be sorry.

Michael Mullane

Tim Curry

Simplicity
(Festival)

I quite liked Tim's last album "*Read My Lips*" although it never really did anything. I note that FM radio have picked up a couple of tracks from "*Simplicity*", so perhaps this one is destined to do more.

One would think that Tim would pick up a lot of sales from admirers of his performance as Frankenfurter in "*Rocky Horror*" but this hasn't happened. Then again, Tim's solo efforts are a considerable departure from the high camp he produced in the film.

Tim Curry's vocal efforts on *Simplicity* are likeable. Although he has a limited range, his lower register is very rich and well rounded. He tackles a fairly wide range of styles here and usually acquits himself well. Lots of able help is provided by a bunch of very capable musicians, and most especially (in my book) from guitar great Earl Slick. Any album featuring this tasteful player is sure to please me as long as he gets the opportunity to show his stuff.

The first track is a reggae effort called "*Working on my Tan*". Tim's impression of Bob Marley is amusing, but doesn't quite spoil the song as it's well arranged and musically played. Next up is Rod Argent's "*She's Not There*". I liked Santana's version better as this one is a little stilted and Tim camps it up a little too much. However it's such a good song that it's hard to stuff it up too much.

The title track really lifts the levels. "*Simplicity*" is right up Tim's alley, it's slow and soulful, as are most of his best efforts. There is a nice sax and piano sound here. Side Two has three well known covers on it. Mercifully Tim sticks close to the originals and thus produces three good tracks. "*Dancing in the Streets*", "*Summer in the City*" and "*I Put a Spell on You*" are all pleasing. Side Two also has "*Betty Jean*", a little gem of a white reggae song with a strong chorus.

Triumbs up for the one. I like Tim Curry's voice and the selection of songs presented here show it to good advantage. I guess it's sort of like a rock'n'roll Frank Sinatra album in that a lot of standards are reworked to highlight a crooner's voice. Anyway, have a listen to "*I Put a Spell on You*". Nicely done Earl.

Stan Coulter

GARY U.S. BONDS DEDICATION
GARY U.S. BONDS DEDICATION
EMAV 17
With the single (THIS LITTLE GIRL)
—Featuring—
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
& the E street Band
EMI

Classix Nouveaux
Night People
(EMI)

Duran Duran
Duran Duran
(EMI)

Vacuous debuts from two sets of heavily made-up, stylishly garbed non-entities. Sorry kids, but there's nothing on either of these pretentiously packaged soul-less offerings to stir the heart, excite the feet or stimulate the intellect of the discerning listener, let alone me. This stuff is definitely the thin edge of the already slender "New Romantic" (blech, that phrase!) wedge, falling somewhere to the rear of the likes of Spandau Ballet and even the dreaded Steve Strange/Visage ensemble.

It's almost too painful to delve into specifics but I must.

Classix Nouveaux come across as the latest contenders for Queen's position as the reigning monarchs of pretentious silliness, even resorting to stealing the high pitched shrieks from Queen's '75 album *Sheer Heart Attack* and dressing them up in a new set of salt clothes, which is not my idea of stylistic advancement. I'm also not sure as to who looks more ridiculous as a front-person, Sal Solo or Freddie Mercury, but I'll leave you to make your own decision, if it's worth the effort.

Duran Duran's flat (in more ways than one) vinyl thingy is even worse. Almost the entire album sounds like the same song repeated time and again with only minor variations. Only *Night Boat* attempts a different approach rhythmically, but it too suffers from having the same texture/feel as the rest of the songs. I probably wouldn't be so negative about this lot if they weren't so limp, had better songs, more imagination, etc, etc.

Enough's enuff, as they say. What we're dealing with here are two bands that don't seem to be able to scrape up one half way decent idea between them, but who should perhaps appeal to lovers of style over content everywhere.

Ruthven Martinus

Oingo Boingo
Only A Lad
(A&M)

Pete Solley, the man oft accused of polishing off the Sports' endearing rough edges in their early days, takes the co-production credit on Oingo Boingo's debut album, along with the band themselves. From the start everything is crystal clear, precise and professional — traits which are also very much part of the music.

Every little nuance is examined, polished and crammed into all too tight song structures. West Coast harmonized guitar riffs, punctuating brass, technically imaginative drums and spitting vocals (more Andy Partridge than Andy Partridge) all merge together like a complex jigsaw puzzle. It only works, however, for the first couple of songs before getting unbearable.

Listening to their reworking of *You Really Got Me* shows exactly what they are trying to do musically. Abstraction is its nature. Devo seems to be the general aim. Here is the mechanical drum beat, vocal and guitar fills and that Devo style of vocals similar to yodelling, but what's missing seems to be the simplistic charm (for want of a better term) that makes Devo. The abstraction here sounds too conscious, like they are trying too hard to make it different.

Oingo Boingo's lyrics are far from a saving grace. Their Orwellian based idea of society — with its views of alienation and the polite social masks which hide the sordid realities — seems as forced as their music. It also reeks of arrogance.

For instance, *Impostor* deals with a failed artist/musician out of touch with street reality, who turns to criticism as a last resort. Upon seeing which way the wind's blowing — here it is towards punkdom — the critic decides to play it safe by hopping on the bandwagon — with the result that he or she is being dishonest in order to be hip. The implication inherent here is that the band do know where it's at, man, because unlike the critic they are in touch and they do know what street life is like. Therefore they are the ones who are in reality cool and, if you follow me, above criticism. They also ramble on about middle class socialist brats who analyze the class system and pity the poor mass without really knowing the realities. Honourable sentiments, I guess, but here there is a strong ring of pretension.

That's not to say it's not enjoyable — because on just a purely background level, where you don't really concentrate on the music and what's being said, it can be. However, dig deeper and it quickly gets too cynical and boring. Each song on the album displays exactly the same ideas and overall lack the edge needed to involve anyone outside the band. This is ironical since they seem concerned about things in the world's systems which alienate and isolate human beings. But perhaps the greatest irony is a line in *Perfect System*, obviously meant to be a poignant comment on the lack of individuality in a 1984 type system but which backfires because of its applicability to Oingo Boingo's music — "There's no need [illegible]?"

Earl Grey

Jon and Vangelis
The Friends of
Mr Cairo
(Polygram)

Like the other members of the now defunct Yes, Jon Anderson has shown that he was at his best when working within and against the peculiar tensions generated by the odd mis-matching of various individual personalities and differing musical attitudes that existed within the band. You might dismiss him as an old hippy, but he had a definite tough streak that led not only to several line-up changes in the band but also to the production of some of the grittiest techno-rock of the early-mid 1970s. Since his departure from Yes at the close of '79 after an eleven year stretch as its sometimes inspired/inspirational leader and vocalist, Anderson's creative output has not so far been, shall we say, exactly startling.

His attempts to go it alone have up till now shown distinct signs of terminal tweeness and his last album, *Song of Seven*, which was released earlier this year, saw him sinking even deeper into the mire of sickly love songs and blandly inconsequential instrumentation. It seems pretty obvious that in order for Anderson to produce work to match his best with Yes he must once again seek or be placed in challenging musical surroundings, but I don't think that Greek multi-instrumentalist Vangelis provides the necessary chemistry. Jon and Vangelis are too comfortable with each other for their own good, but at least this album — their second collaboration — contains some items of immediate substance and worth, unlike their first offering *Short Stories*, which was so lightweight it had trouble staying on my turntable.

The Friends Of Mr Cairo has three (maybe four, depending on my mood) tracks out of six that stand up by themselves despite their weaknesses, and these see our intrepid pair of old romantics trying a slightly tougher approach instead of their usual dross. The title track, with its cool swinging bass sequencer line, cutting melody and voices reading parts from 1930s movies, has tons of atmosphere as well as moving along quite well for the most part, and Anderson's lyrics and unique voice add a strange ambience that's unusual but effective. This piece works well for about three-quarters of its length, but then slips into unnecessary limpness. The next song is by far the album's gem. *Back to School Boogie* is definitely the funniest, loosest thing I've heard either of these guys do in a studio and it would make a neato single. One thing about the lyrics on this one — Anderson must have gone to a particularly gentle school if he wants to go back to escape the 'tough outer' world. *State of Independence* is the other worthwhile track presented and though its lyrical content is wholly spiritual, its joyous vocal and ethno-electric arrangement make it quite uplifting. Done by someone like Talking Heads it would be even better.

Actually there-in lies the rub ... For his own sake and ours Jon Anderson needs to work with, and maybe even under, some musicians who are more aware of the expanded horizons of music this decade. I'm not exactly putting Vangelis down by not including him in this, it's just that he's very much a minor character in this particular movie. Anderson however still has things to say that are worth listening to and I feel that once he finds his way again we'll get to hear them.

Ruthven Martinus

Matt Taylor/Phil Manning Band
Oz Blues
(Full Moon)

Some months ago I saw the Matt Taylor/Phil Manning Band support Roy Buchanan at the Adelaide Festival Theatre and their bracket was the only thing that saved the night from being a total disaster. They played a set of clean, tight and punchy rock/blues with a minimum of fuss and received a duly warm reception.

The album presents the band much as it sounds in the live arena. It's a no frills production with minimum over-dubbing and no flashy effects. The music is simple, straightforward and basic, rarely straying from some permutation of the 12 bar formula, and is thus not to everybody's taste. However, Manning and Taylor have been treading the boards for more years than I can remember (or they probably care to) and are without any shade of doubt very good at what they do, which is playin' da bloozé.

The album gets off with *Nothing*, a basic twelvey that features some good harp playing from Matt Taylor. Matt's voice is nothing if not distinctive and is tailor made (excuse me) to this sort of sleaze. The one rocks into *Nice Friends*, another 4 chord rocker done with style. Phil Manning takes lead vocals for *The Line*, a rollicking song that reminds me of Mungo Jerry. Manning's voice is somewhat unprepossessing, sounding akin to a higher pitched Eric Clapton, but he handles the task satisfactorily. *Laughing* is a nice and sleazy medium pacer with some impressive harp right on the end. Side One closes with *Spring Hill*, which was a highlight of the live set. It also takes pride of place as my pick for best track on the album.

Side Two continues along as expected and includes a rework of 'I'm a Man' called *Mannish Boy*. *Tammi* is a blues-rock with a swing feel and the closer, *Boogie 2*, is just what the title suggests, a full on fast boogie.

Overall, this is a record for blues enthusiasts and long time fans of Manning and Taylor. I can't see it breaking any broader ground than that. There are some fine moments provided by excellent solo work on guitar and harmonica and the rhythm section is tight and solid. As far as recent Australian blues productions go, I think Kevin Borich and Dutch Tilders' collaboration has the edge, but *OZ BLUES* is definitely a worthwhile effort.

Stan Coulter

Joe Jackson's Jumpin' Jive
Joe Jackson's Jumpin' Jive
(A & M)

This is great stuff and certainly a welcome change from Jackson's usual Costello impersonations/emulations. He's disposed of his old back up unit and assembled an extremely dekky looking bunch of jazz muso's around him and together they romp through the 1940's jump jive and swing on this record with verve and obvious joy. Joe's vocals and vibe work fit this style well and it's clear that this music was an early love of his.

I don't know whether this is a one-off effort or not, but whatever the case Jackson and crew have produced a worthwhile time warp and have brought the style to a young audience without trivializing it. Suspend what prejudice you might have, cos this is fun dance music played as such, so avoid delay, go buy a copy and dance!

Ruthven Martinus

The dBs
Stands for Decibels
(Liberation)

Most albums require two or three listenings before one can start remembering full chunks of songs (y'know, choruses and the like) and a couple more again to get to know the full thing. With the dB's debut album however it's nearly all there on the first listening — probably because the songs have similarities to everything from the Beachboys to the Strawbs and update it ... bands like the [illegible] — but don't get me wrong. Unlike many albums which are instantly accessible, this one doesn't last a couple of times round the turntable before vanishing into a wisp of air. Rather it becomes more appreciable with exposure. More subtleties and interesting ideas become apparent with each new listening, ideas which take this record above the normal pastiche of pop records.

Song wise, the album can be divided up into three types, the first of which is the pretty conventional American pop song. One of these, *Black and White*, opens the album. It's a positive start with [illegible] the bearer of the voice. The album doesn't say it's made for the music the dB's put out. Often intensely bittersweet and yet able to accommodate a rocker approach, it suits the lyrical moods of lost love, new love and falling love, which are the prevailing themes on the album. *Big Brown Eyes*, a good, short and to the point song, fits into this first type, as does *The Fight* and *Bad Reputation*, all extremely reminiscent of things I've heard before but nonetheless good tunes.

The second type (do I sound like I'm categorizing?) are the more adventurous songs but with a conventional structure. Prime examples are *Dynamite*, with its naturally [illegible] vocals and [illegible] change of rhythm with a cute patch of discordant keyboards similar to Barry Andrews' early XTC stuff. Notable too is the pseudo funk bass which hits the higher registers with very thoughtfully constructed bass lines adding extra colour to the music.

In the final album category are the songs which overlap the previous two types — fairly conventional ideas worked into an unusual framework. Of the three types it's these that seem at first the least successful. However, after a couple of times the songs are revealed as perhaps the most thoughtful on the album. *She's Not Worried*, with its sometimes Beachboys' treatment, varies between the soft and the loud line and the [illegible] in no way uncomfortably. *Moving in Your* [illegible] side could have been dreary, but the arrangement is subtle and gentle, with seemingly beautiful vocals, sparse piano, staccato bass and a distant, echoed snare haunting.

The dB's as a pop band don't strongly rely on hooks but rather on a constant bouncy flow of often danceable and always accessible melodies and music with a dash of imagination. Lyrically they have no need of abstraction or social comment — it just wouldn't suit them or the innocence of their music. The album does have a few flaws, but their next dozen I have to be too much of an improvement to make it worthwhile giving a listen and I [illegible]

Earl Grey

There's More To Word Of Mouth Than Meets The Ear
TONI BASIL
WORD OF MOUTH
There's 3 ways of getting into 'Word Of Mouth'
1. The Record MLF 453
2. The 1+1 Cassette MCF7 453
3. ½" Video VHS AND BETA
(SELECTED TRACKS FROM THE ALBUM)
POWDERWORKS THRU RCA
RADIALCHOICE
RECORDS YOU CAN WATCH

THE NEW ALBUM — UNDERNEATH THE COLOURS

INXS

BARBARIANS TOUR

OCTOBER

THURS	8th	ARMADALE HOTEL
FRI	9th	COUNCIL CLUB
SAT	10th	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
MON	12th	AUST RULES CLUB – WAGGA
WED	14th	ENFIELD BOULEVARD HOTEL – SYDNEY
FRI	16th	ROYAL ANTLER HOTEL
SAT	17th	SYLVANIA HOTEL
SUN	18th	BELAIR HOTEL – BELMONT
TUES	20th	NEW ENGLAND UNI – ARMIDALE
WED	21st	HOMESTEAD HOTEL – BRISBANE
THURS	22nd	GRAND HOTEL – GOLD COAST
FRI	23rd	QUEENSLAND UNI
SAT	24th	THOMPSON S HOTEL – MOOLOOLABAH
SUN	25th	PLAYROOM GOLD COAST
MON	26th	LISMORE R S L
WED	28th	PLANTATION HOTEL, COFF'S HARBOUR
THURS	29th	WEST TAMWORTH LEAGUES CLUB
FRI	30th	AMBASSADOR NEWCASTLE
SAT	31st	FAMILY INN SYDNEY